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Chair: Mr. Díaz de la Guardia (Vice-Chair) (Spain)

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In the absence of Mr. Djani (Indonesia), Mr. Díaz de la Guardia (Spain), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Tribute to the memory of His Majesty Bhumibol Adulyadej, the late King of Thailand

1. **The Chair**, on behalf of all members of the Committee, expressed condolences to the Government and people of Thailand on the passing of His Majesty Bhumibol Adulyadej, the late King of Thailand.

Agenda item 16: Information and communications technologies for development (A/71/67-E/2016/51, A/71/67-E/2016/51/Corr.1 and A/71/307)

2. **Ms. Sirimanne** (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels (A/71/67-E/2016/51), said that the report included information provided by 32 United Nations entities and other international organizations and stakeholders, and covered stakeholders' activities in 2015. The report pointed out that digital divides persisted within and between countries and needed to be addressed. Half the world's population was not using the Internet and therefore could not take advantage of its social and economic benefits. Internet use in developed countries was 81 per cent, compared to 40 per cent in developing countries and 15 per cent in the least developed countries. The gender gap in Internet use had grown from 11 per cent in 2013 to 12 per cent in 2016, while it was 31 per cent in the least developed countries. A digital divide also existed between rural and urban areas within countries, with only 29 per cent of the world's rural population covered by a third-generation (3G) network. Digital divides exacerbated and were associated with differences in skills and capabilities. Efforts should be taken to provide affordable access and develop content and capabilities; more should be done to ensure that the least developed countries and poor and marginalized communities were not left behind.

3. The close links between the information society and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) had been illustrated in the report. During the General Assembly's 2015 overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, Member States had called for the close alignment of the Summit process and the 2030 Agenda and had emphasized the cross-cutting contribution of information and communications technologies (ICTs) to the Sustainable Development Goals. Member States had encouraged a prominent profile for ICTs in the Technology Facilitation Mechanism. With regard to how ICTs could help achieve the 2030 Agenda, it was important to take into account not only their direct impact, but also the far-reaching changes in how Governments, businesses and citizens behaved and interacted. The greater opportunities brought by ICTs were accompanied by challenges, however, including the risk of greater inequality arising from digital divides, threats to personal security and privacy, and possible environmental costs.

4. Work by UNCTAD in its capacity as secretariat of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development included the examination, with a view to development outcomes, of new and emerging technologies, including automation, the Internet of Things and big data. For example, devices associated with the Internet of Things had been used to identify climate trends and mobilize resources during disease outbreaks. Although automation could increase productivity, it could also make labour redundant. The overall impacts of ICTs required careful analysis. Following the submission of a proposal to the United States Department of Commerce National Telecommunications and Information Administration in March 2016, the transition of the stewardship of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority function had taken place on 1 October.

5. During the overall review of the implementation of the World Summit outcomes, the General Assembly had acknowledged the Internet Governance Forum as a multi-stakeholder platform for discussion of Internet governance issues and had extended its mandate for a further 10 years. Following the request made in General Assembly resolution 70/125, the Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development had established a working group to develop recommendations on how to further implement enhanced cooperation as envisioned in the Tunis

Agenda for the Information Society. It had held its first meeting on 30 September and would submit a report to the Commission at its twenty-first session in 2018. In December 2015, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination had issued a joint statement pledging support for the full implementation of the outcomes of the 10-year review of the World Summit. The past decade had demonstrated the value of cooperation and dialogue between Governments, international organizations, the private sector, the technical community and civil society. The ability of those diverse stakeholders to work together in the common interest of a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society was inspiring.

6. **Ms. Roudil** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)), introducing the report of the Director-General of UNESCO on communication for development programmes in the United Nations system, transmitted in a note by the Secretary-General (A/71/307), said that the report was evidence of the engagement of United Nations agencies in the field of communication and information. The report, which had received input from five United Nations organizations, provided an overview of activities in the United Nations system to facilitate the empowerment of individuals and communities through communication and participation in the media. Since the previous report in 2014, much progress had been made in coordinating the efforts of United Nations organizations and setting a cohesive agenda for medium- and long-term action. Sustainable Development Goal 16 called for peaceful and inclusive societies and the building of effective, accountable and inclusive institutions, which would require public access to information and the protection of fundamental freedoms. Those developments indicated the continued importance of media and communication as tools for sustainable development and demonstrated the need for United Nations organizations to work in a coordinated and coherent manner.

7. The indicator framework for assessing progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals had created new, updated and highly targeted reporting mechanisms for communication for development in the United Nations system. UNESCO contributed to Goal 16, target 16.10,on ensuring public access to information and protecting fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements. It facilitated effective media systems at the country level and continued to increase pluralism and diversity in terms of operations and editorial content. That work included ensuring equal access to the overall strategies and policies of media, not only as media consumers but as content producers and contributors. A key priority in that context was the achievement of full gender equality in media, in line with the UNESCO Global Priority Gender Equality.

8. UNESCO supported community media by working with Member States to build an enabling legislative environment in areas such as licensing, spectrum access and funding, and to build capacity in key skills, in particular on ICTs. A seminar entitled "Community Media Sustainability: Strengthening Policies and Funding" had been held in September 2015 to coordinate international action and produce concrete recommendations in that area. Community media was a focus of World Radio Day, celebrated annually on 13 February. World Press Freedom Day, the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists and the International Day for Universal Access to Information were marked annually to encourage freedom of expression and access to information. The Riga and Finlandia Declarations, produced as part of World Press Freedom Day in 2015 and 2016, reaffirmed freedom of expression, press freedom and access to information as fundamental rights necessary to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. Those areas of focus were represented in the International Programme for the Development of Communication, a mechanism that had been reaffirmed in General Assembly resolution 70/93. In 2015 and 2016, 122 projects, costing US$1.9 million, had been approved by the Programme. The largest share of those projects related to initiatives in Africa, in line with the UNESCO Global Priority Africa. The overall priority of UNESCO was facilitating media development and the role of media in sustainable development, which had framed its contribution to formulating the Sustainable Development Goals and their indicators.

9. In light of the opportunities for UNESCO to report its work in relation to Sustainable Development Goal 16, she suggested that the reports on communication for development in the United Nations system, which predated the 2030 Agenda, had been

superseded. The situation had changed significantly since the first Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development in 1980 and the launch of the annual reports on communication for development programmes in the United Nations system in 1996. That was particularly true with the advent of ICTs and the opportunities they offered for interaction and automation. No Inter-Agency Round Table had taken place since 2014 when the discussion had centred on the lack of high-level representation and financing, and the prospects of holding another were in question due to financial constraints and an increased focus in the United Nations system on specific and effective action. Previous reports had noted the lack of substantive discussion on the part of Member States who appeared to prefer to focus on ICTs for sustainable development. The work of United Nations agencies and organizations in the field of communication for development should be dovetailed more directly with the Sustainable Development Goals, in line with the call for the United Nations to be more fit-for-purpose.

10. Alongside reporting under the Sustainable Development Goals, the report on communication for development programmes might appear to be a duplication of effort. Reporting on Sustainable Development Goals should suffice to indicate how communication was contributing to specific issues, including Sustainable Development Goal 16, by expanding the environment for public access to information and fundamental freedoms. Some might also believe that the Inter-Agency Round Table had served its purpose. She drew the Committee's attention to the recommendation to discontinue both the reports on communication for development and the Inter-Agency Round Table in favour of a more direct contribution by the United Nations system to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

11. **Ms. Plasai** (Thailand), speaking in her national capacity, noted the commitment of the late King of Thailand to realizing the potential of ICT for development. Speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, she said that ICTs were important to achieving internationally agreed development goals. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) and the 2030 Agenda recognized ICTs as critical enablers of development and important levers of change for achieving sustainable development. ICTs also held tremendous potential for the eradication of poverty and the promotion of the three pillars of sustainable development. The Group welcomed the statement of the 10-year review of the World Summit on the implementation of the World Summit outcomes and reaffirmed the vision of the 10-year review of the World Summit beyond 2015. ICTs should play a prominent role in promoting inclusive growth and development. The Group of 77 and China recognized the catalytic and integral link between access to ICTs, technological development and sustainable development.

12. While according to the Secretary-General's report, 95 per cent of the world's population was covered by mobile networks, the Group wished to emphasize the need to bridge the digital divide between and within countries. Unequal access to the Internet persisted, with broadband networks and services more widely available and affordable in developed than developing countries and, limited broadband access in rural areas in most developing countries. In such situations, it might not be possible to harness the potential of ICTs for sustainable development. Earlier in the year, in its capacity as Chair of the Group of 77 and China, Thailand had organized the Meeting of Experts on ICTs and Sustainable Development for South-South Cooperation to push forward the Group's vision of the critical role of ICTs in building a smart nation and its commitment to the goals set out at the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society. Members of the Group of 77 and China had stepped up cooperation with the aim of closing the digital divide among them.

13. A multidimensional approach that included quality, affordability, relevance and local content was required to address the digital divide. Developed countries and stakeholders should provide enhanced and coordinated support to developing countries through technology transfer, effective and sustainable technical assistance and capacity-building. The Group of 77 and China had reaffirmed that principle at the first multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, held in 2016. A long-standing supporter of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, the Group of 77 and China looked forward to its upcoming activities

and to exploring ways of harnessing science, technology and innovation to implement the Sustainable Development Goals at the second multi-stakeholder forum in 2017.

14. The gender gap in ICT access and use gave cause for concern. Capacity-building was important to all, including the most vulnerable, who should be empowered to become content creators, not merely users. The growing importance and contribution of ICTs to development in such areas as health, agriculture and humanitarian response should be highlighted. Countries needed to invest in capacity-building and education to use ICTs to build on the new sustainable development agenda and derive social and economic gains from technological innovation. The Group attached great importance to the full and effective implementation of the outcomes of the Geneva and Tunis phases of the World Summit, including provisions relating to Internet governance. In an increasingly interdependent world, the representation and participation of developing countries in Internet governance should be strengthened, to ensure the stability, security and continuity of the Internet, in accordance with the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society. The Group would work closely with its development partners on the draft resolution on ICTs for development, to ensure the attainment of inclusive sustainable development, in particular through ICTs.

15. **Mr. Ismail** (Brunei Darussalam), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that ICTs played a significant role in human progress, including economic and social growth and development. Thanks to the rapid pace of innovation, ICTs were increasingly central to everyday life. It was an important instrument to connect ASEAN members to the mainstream of global development. Given the integrated and indivisible nature of the Sustainable Development Goals, the cross-cutting contribution of ICTs could act as either a leveller or a divider between countries. The international community must seize the opportunity to harness the full potential of ICTs for sustainable development and provide universal, affordable access to ICTs. The overall review of the implementation of World Summit outcomes had illustrated the successes — in particular on connectivity, innovation and access to ICTs. Rapid growth had been observed in fixed and wireless broadband, mobile devices, cloud computing and big data. Although ASEAN remained committed to the World Summit vision of a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society, uneven results remained a cause of concern, as did persistent challenges, namely the digital divide and the socioeconomic gap between developed and developing countries. Those challenges needed to be urgently addressed to ensure that no one was left behind.

16. According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), only 41 per cent of the population of developing countries would enjoy access to the Internet by the end of 2016, compared to 84 per cent in developed countries. Since the majority of future new Internet users would come from developing countries, there was an urgent need to bridge the digital divide between developed and developing countries. Enabling policy environments and international cooperation should be strengthened, with a view to improving affordability, connectivity, access, education, content and capabilities. ICTs had played a critical role in regional integration and connectivity efforts, and in narrowing the development gaps within and between Member States. ICTs would also play an increasingly pivotal role in furthering economic integration and community-building.

17. ASEAN remained committed to the development and promotion of ICTs in the region, including through the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 and the ASEAN ICT Master Plan 2020 — successor to the ASEAN ICT Master Plan 2015 that had been successfully completed. Under the completed plan, the export of ICT services had increased, while the costs of Internet access and mobile subscriptions had fallen sharply. Government services had been digitized and there was increased awareness of cybersecurity. The focus going forward would be on developing human capacity under the ASEAN ICT Master Plan 2020 in order to transition to a digitally-enabled economy that was secure, sustainable and transformative. Since digital economies were knowledge-based economies, ASEAN Member States welcomed the participation, expertise and experiences of different stakeholders with respect to developing those skills. The ASEAN ICT Master Plan 2020 set out a vision for adapting to the digital economy through eight strategic thrusts that included economic development and human capital development.

18. **Ms. Beckles** (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the level playing field sought by the sustainable development agenda could be provided through equitable access to the means of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level. All nations and peoples must be equipped with the capacity, infrastructure and knowledge to keep up with ICTs and harness their potential to improve quality of life. As a group comprising small island developing States, CARICOM faced unique challenges to sustainable development, in particular acute vulnerability to the unmitigated impact of climate change and natural disasters. In the past week, the peoples of Haiti, Jamaica, the Bahamas and other CARICOM countries had sustained significant damage and loss of life following the landfall of Hurricane Matthew.

19. Further challenges included dependence on volatile export markets, narrow resource bases and limited economies of scale. As middle-income countries, most CARICOM members had limited access to development financing, which impeded their efforts to tackle localized poverty and inequality. An enhanced capacity to participate in evolving knowledge spaces and increased access to and application of ICTs would help to overcome those challenges. Furthermore, ICTs could play a pivotal role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goals 5, 13 and 17. CARICOM considered that technological platforms, devices and knowledge spaces were instruments that could help achieve good governance, social accountability and improved delivery of public services, and improve the well-being of their people.

20. The collaborative approach to development maintained by CARICOM leveraged the benefits of combined competencies to overcome the limitations of island nations' small size. The region had already made strides towards achieving the overarching objective of the 2030 Agenda and would continue to adopt a collaborative approach to developing an enabling environment and enhancing the regional ICT landscape, in accordance with the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (Samoa Pathway). In September, CARICOM leaders had endorsed the Roadmap for the Single ICT Space, which was expected to be implemented well before the 2030 deadline for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

21. National efforts must be bolstered by a parallel and robust multilateral response to eroding the digital divides between and within countries. ICTs formed the bedrock of modern society; any nation not equipped with ICT infrastructure and capacity — and inclusive access to up-to-date innovations and knowledge — would be left behind. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda required sustained dialogue on best practices in ICT development, multi-stakeholder collaboration and private-public partnerships. Resources would need to be transferred from developed countries to the less and least developed countries, including small island developing States and middle-income countries, which still lagged behind. In that regard, CARICOM supported the work of the United Nations and ITU, which had first launched the World Summit in 2003. CARICOM welcomed the continuation of conversation and work under the framework of the World Summit, which remained relevant to efforts towards implementing the 2030 Agenda.

22. **Mr. Bin Momen** (Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that ICTs had proven to be a catalyst for economic growth and a force that could empower billions of people. The spread of ICT and global interconnectedness was recognized in the 2030 Agenda, particularly in target 9.c, as having great potential to accelerate human progress, bridge the digital divide and develop knowledge societies. Internet use had tripled in a decade; people, institutions, researchers and Governments were more connected than ever. Global averages on network coverage masked disparities in Internet access between countries: only 7 per cent of households in the least developed countries had Internet access, compared to 34 per cent in developing countries. Disparities also prevailed within countries, particularly between urban and rural areas. Current innovations in ICT were largely designed for the developed world. Market forces alone could not meet the needs of the least developed countries. Low Internet use overlapped with subpar services and high access costs. Rates of fixed broadband subscriptions remained marginal in the least developed countries; the 2014 average had been 0.43 per 100 people. The Alliance for Affordable Internet estimated that, at current trends, target 9.c on

universal and affordable access to the Internet in the least developed countries by 2020 would be missed by 22 years, due to high connectivity costs. The *World Development Report 2016* suggested that the impact of ICT on productivity, opportunity and government accountability had been far less than expected. To harness the benefits of ICT, technology should be supported by appropriate know-how, institutions, private-public partnerships and a vibrant business climate.

23. The least developed countries wished to put forward six recommendations on how to achieve the Goal 9 target on universal and affordable access to the Internet in the least developed countries. First, countries should adopt appropriate policies and strategies to ensure the availability, affordability and accessibility of ICT services, including broadband technologies. Those policies should be coupled with modern infrastructure and service delivery systems. Second, ICT services and facilities must be combined with relevant skills, capabilities and opportunities. Appropriate literacy and numeracy training would allow citizens to seize the opportunities of ICT. Third, appropriate technologies and know-how were needed to adapt and commercialize ICTs for local needs and circumstances. The Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries (Technology Bank) could foster the transfer of technology and know-how to the least developed countries. Fourth, least developed countries needed adequate financial support to build their ICT networks and procure instruments, hardware and software to have access to modern equipment. Fifth, ICT partnerships should be fostered through South-South and triangular cooperation; his country had hosted a side event on that issue during the high-level segment of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly. Finally, development partners should honour the commitments made in the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 to continue providing places and scholarships for students and trainees from the least developed countries (target 4.b of the 2030 Agenda).

24. **Mr. Sareer** (Maldives), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), said that small island States were unable to capitalize fully on the potential of ICTs to improve people's lives. AOSIS had participated in the review of World Summit outcomes in 2015 and was satisfied with its results. Efforts to bridge, rather than exacerbate, the digital divide should continue. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda relied heavily on the development and transfer of ICTs; indeed, Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 9 made specific reference to increasing access to ICTs. General Assembly resolution 70/125 also called for the close alignment of the World Summit process and the 2030 Agenda and highlighted the cross-cutting contribution of ICTs to the Sustainable Development Goals and poverty eradication. AOSIS noted the emphasis in the Secretary-General's report on the use of ICTs in early warning systems for natural disasters and emergency communications, which was particularly beneficial to small island developing States. More work remained to be done, however, and there was a need to assess how and in what areas ICTs should be transferred and how to incentivize access.

25. Access to ICT remained a challenge in small island States, where populations were scattered; mobile cellular prices were relatively high; and infrastructure to support ICT development and deployment, and capacity for their effective use, were lacking. Small populations and geographical factors limited the number of operators able to sustainably compete in the market. A comprehensive approach and targeted policies were needed to overcome those obstacles. Small island developing States were particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and needed policies for increased self-reliance. In that regard, ICTs could help in evacuation efforts and communicate critical information to the public. They were already being used in disaster risk reduction.

26. Extreme weather events also threatened the stable operation of critical infrastructure systems and could compromise telecommunications such as the Internet, which relied largely on fixed data connections and power supplies. Small island States therefore needed to increase access to other kinds of communication devices that could facilitate the operation of essential services and emergency management when backbone communication infrastructure was lost during natural disasters. The potential for ICTs in island States was vast, varying from reducing barriers of distance to enhancing tourism and economic growth, and allowing island States to work together. Small island developing States recognized the revolutionary momentum of

knowledge societies. The Samoa Pathway also identified the need for enhanced access and use of ICT infrastructure networks to sustain high levels of economic growth. He urged the international community to work together to realize and harness the potential and opportunity of ICTs as the true means of implementation of its goals and aspirations.

27. **Ms. Ponce** (Philippines) said that ICT was a transformative and necessary enabler for nation-building, poverty eradication, inclusive growth and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In recognition of that fact and of the need for an enabling policy environment, the Philippines had upgraded its ICT government agency to a fully-fledged Ministry in 2015. The mandate of the new Ministry included ensuring the provision of strategic, reliable, cost-efficient and citizen-centred ICT infrastructure, systems and resources; ensuring universal access to secure ICT services, promoting digital literacy; empowering disadvantaged groups through ICT, including the elderly, persons with disabilities and indigenous and minority groups promoting the creation of local content, applications and services; and ensuring individual rights to privacy and confidentiality of personal information. The Philippines fully supported the World Summit vision of an information society where everyone could create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, which would enable individuals, communities and nations to achieve their full potential through sustainable development and a better quality of life. Her delegation supported the World Summit outcomes and action lines for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. ICT should be promoted to enhance key public services, such as education, health and revenue generation. That approach was exemplified in the Tech4Ed project that provided a single online platform for users to access information on education, agriculture and government services. In towns, villages and rural areas without shared Internet access facilities, access was facilitated through community e-centres. The project had won a WSIS Project Prize in 2016.

28. The global community needed to address the broadening digital divide within and among States. Appropriate infrastructure, increased speeds and reduced costs for broadband access were priorities for her Government, which was building a national broadband network and extending coverage of free Wi-Fi services to poorer and isolated municipalities and rural areas. That activity was aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 9. Although domestic resource mobilization and encouraging private sector investment were an important start, international cooperation for capacity-building and technology transfer would be essential. The upcoming multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals would be important in that regard. In the move towards a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society, it was important to remember that the collective efforts of Governments, the private sector and a highly critical public were essential to capitalizing on current and future ICT gains. Those gains must be achieved without jeopardizing the rights, personal security and privacy of individuals, despite the growing pervasiveness of the Internet, technology and social media in everyday life.

29. **Mr. Triantoto** (Indonesia) said that while mobile broadband and Long-Term Evolution (LTE) networks had reached more than half the world's population; the remaining half remained unconnected and unaware of ICTs. More must be done to ensure that the least developed countries and poor and marginalized communities in all countries were not left behind. In some situations, ICTs would not be the best tool for development. They could be disruptive and abet social tensions. Nonetheless, their transformative effects were undeniable and they would act as an enabler of the global transformation called for in the 2030 Agenda.

30. Implementation of the outcomes of the 10-year review of the World Summit should be closely aligned with the 2030 Agenda. Access to ICTs and ICT capacities should be improved. To that end, action was required in three areas: investing in infrastructure, capacity-building, technology and knowledge transfer and integrated regulatory frameworks; building public confidence in the use and security of ICTs; optimizing lessons learned through the development of a platform to exchange good ICT practices, identify issues and solve common challenges — the Internet Governance Forum, under the aegis of the United Nations as an outcome of the World Summit, and South-South and triangular cooperation could provide space for that activity.

31. In Indonesia, a national e-commerce road map was being finalized, and the Palapa Ring Project would boost connectivity and enhance inclusive growth and sustainable development. The project would connect the seven major islands of Indonesia by fibre optic cable, while the e-commerce road map was expected to create a thousand start-ups in 2016 and expedite US$130 billion worth of business transactions by 2020. The Indonesian parliament was considering the revision of legislation from 2008 on electronic information and transactions. At the global level, Indonesia had hosted the Internet Governance Forum in 2013 and was a member of the Global Commission on Internet Governance and the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security.

32. **Mr. Sinha** (India) said that improved legal and regulatory frameworks were required to make full use of technological innovations. The Digital India programme was aimed at empowering citizens through improved governance, on-demand services and digital infrastructure for all. While entrepreneurs were inventing innovative business models and platforms, the public authorities were striving to improve service delivery using ICT tools. The programme would also help to bridge the digital divide and empower vulnerable sections of the population. Its areas of focus would include broadband highways, universal access to mobile connectivity, e-governance, information for all, electronic manufacturing and ICT for jobs and early harvest programmes.

33. The development landscape was becoming more responsive and inclusive. Increased ICT accessibility and affordability were allowing a broad spectrum of e-services to reach all groups in society, including the poor, those in remote areas and other disadvantaged groups. Those e-services ranged from distance learning to telemedicine and agriculture information services. In addition, ICTs were used for disaster preparedness and early warning, and were boosting the efficiency of transport and logistics. The development of an ICT-based land registry and management system had streamlined administrative processes and simplified transactions. E-government provided easy access to forms, birth certificates and other information, while open government data promoted innovation and helped small and medium-sized enterprises to access business opportunities. In a landmark success in the area of financial inclusion, a biometric identification system had been combined with banking services and mobile phone technologies. More than 1 billion Indian citizens had been issued identity cards as a result. In March 2017, India would host the tenth International Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance.

34. **Mr. Ronen** (Israel) said that, over the past decade, ICT had penetrated nearly all corners of the globe and revolutionized many facets of daily life. Unlike traditional finite resources, the knowledge fuelling ICT was constrained only by the limits of human imagination and creativity. Knowledge could be shared with people on the other side of the globe, enabling fruitful collaboration and transformational developments. Progress had been made thanks to cooperation between Governments and the private sector, and to an environment conducive to investment in ICTs. Maintaining that course would require the collective effort of all sectors — Governments, private enterprise, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international institutions.

35. The commitment to connecting the unconnected must be reaffirmed. It was essential to address the digital divide in order to ensure fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals and leave no one behind. That would require the successful development, utilization and application of ICT. In the 68 years since its establishment, Israel had been transformed through hard work, directed investment and determination — from a land of swamps and sand into a start-up nation. Israel remained committed to cooperation and to reaching out to its neighbours and partners to share its technological achievements.

36. **Mr. Lopyrev** (Russian Federation), welcoming the outcomes of the World Summit review process, said that his delegation supported the continuation of that process, which should focus on establishing a secure and reliable regime for the use of ICT, under the auspices of the United Nations and on the basis of international standards, principles and rules on the behaviour of States in the information society. The United Nations system must promote a deeper understanding of the rapidly developing information society and its impact on Governments, the economy and the community. He agreed with the majority of

conclusions contained in the Secretary-General's report, including the importance of bridging the digital divide that many countries rightly considered a key constraint on development, and expressed support for the further development of broadband services, electronic trade, cloud computing and the Internet of Things, and the need to ensure confidence in ICT and appropriate security measures for its use.

37. The development and widespread use of ICT had become a strong trend in global development. Its use was essential to increasing national economic competitiveness, expanding opportunities for economic integration and strengthening public administration. Furthermore, ICT was a key means of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, discussions on the development of ICT should be guided by the principle of the leading role of ITU as the specialized agency of the United Nations for the international regulation of telecommunications and ICT development. The relevance of the principles contained in the Tunis Agenda should be emphasized; Governments must, on an equal basis, play their part and perform their duties to resolve international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet. That approach required the development of an international legal framework for the Internet, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the equal distribution of authority among all States, rendering the global system the heritage of humankind.

38. **Mr. Perera** (Sri Lanka) said that despite 10 years of remarkable growth in ICTs, including in fixed and wireless broadband Internet, mobile Internet, smartphones and tablets, cloud computing and big data, the digital divide persisted, as did the gap in broadband access between developed and developing countries, within countries and, especially, between genders. Bridging the digital divide was essential to achieving sustainable development, notably by mobilizing resources for investment in the ICT sector, which remained a key challenge for developing countries. International cooperation was also vital, while far-reaching policies and strategies could contribute at the national level.

39. Sri Lanka had a separate ministry dedicated to telecommunications and digital infrastructure; the Government had recognized ICTs as key to meeting development challenges. Secondary, tertiary and informal vocational education increasingly included ICT in their curricula. Facilitating financial inclusion was also part of the national ICT strategy. The ICT sector in Sri Lanka had grown considerably; IT exports were expected to bring in US$1 billion by the end of 2016. The national broadband policy and the Government's free Wi-Fi project were helping to narrow the digital divide and harness the power of ICTs for development. Increased mobile and broadband penetration was benefiting some of the most remote areas of Sri Lanka. As a multi-ethnic, multicultural society, Sri Lanka had taken the lead in establishing the technical conditions to facilitate the use of local languages on the Internet. A legal framework for e-governance and e-commerce had been introduced. In 2015, Sri Lanka had become the first South Asian country to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Use of Electronic Communications in International Contracts and had become a State party to the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime.

40. **Mr. AlGhunaim** (Saudi Arabia) said that it was important to follow-up on the World Summit outcomes and to bridge the digital divide. Saudi Arabia had adopted the Vision for WSIS Beyond 2015 and made efforts to implement the recommendations made by the World Summit since its launch in 2003, including by participating in the Secretary-General's Working Group on Internet Governance. ITU had conferred its ICTs in Sustainable Development Award on the King of Saudi Arabia in 2012, and the Kingdom had also won several WSIS Project Prizes. The Saudi Vision 2030 economic plan included measures to strengthen electronic services for economic development by establishing an enabling environment for investment in ICT.

41. Both the Tunis Agenda and the World Summit outcome documents had adopted a multi-stakeholder approach to responsibility for the Internet and stressed that policy authority for Internet-related public policy issues was the sovereign right of States. However, progress on Internet governance had been slow, in particular as it related to enhanced cooperation to enable Governments, on an equal footing, to carry out their roles and responsibilities in international public policy issues (Tunis Agenda, para. 69). He welcomed General Assembly resolution 70/125, which requested the Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, through the Economic and Social Council, to establish a working group to

develop recommendations on how to further implement enhanced cooperation, as envisioned in the Tunis Agenda. However, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development had not followed that recommendation in full. He therefore called on the General Assembly to ensure more equitable representation in that working group for the different regional groups.

42. **Ms.** Yilianne **Sánchez Rodríguez** (Cuba) said that despite the evolution in innovation and access to ICT, the digital divide between and within countries gave cause for concern. There was an urgent need to eliminate the obstacles to ICT access for developing countries. The lack of political will on the part of many developed countries and a desire to protect their unjust international economic order were key factors in slowing progress towards fair, equitable and inclusive information. She called for follow-up on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda pertaining to ICT. Inappropriate use of ICTs, including the use of social networks that contravened international law and the well-being of any State, could endanger the international community and must cease. The use of ICTs must be fully compatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, in particular the sovereignty of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and internationally recognized norms.

43. The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) had declared its region a zone of peace and had recognized the value of the Internet as a tool to promote peace and human development. Despite the embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba for nearly half a century, Cuba sought to develop the Internet for all with the engagement of the population in order to improve productivity and economic growth. Solidarity, partnership and cooperation between Governments and all other stakeholders were necessary to build the information society.

44. **Mr. Castro Cordoba** (Costa Rica) said that the information society could make a valuable contribution to the promotion and achievement of sustainable development, particularly since the adoption of major international instruments such as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the 2030 Agenda, the World Summit outcome documents and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. ICTs were fundamental to democratizing processes and more effective implementation of international instruments. Costa Rica was committed to strengthening the multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance and closer cooperation that acknowledged the key role of the private sector and civil society and the needs of developing countries, in particular those referred to as middle-income countries, whose capacities should be strengthened to facilitate their integration in global value chains.

45. The information society should promote and ensure all human rights and recognize online all human rights protected offline. Some of those fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of opinion and expression, and of association, and an independent press, would entail the protection of journalists, bloggers and human rights defenders. Human rights should be reflected in the implementation of international agreements concerning ICT, which would benefit the ICT field and help to build more peaceful and inclusive societies that could in turn benefit from their transformative potential. Efforts should be made to expand access to ICTs and create capacities for the generation of new content. An open and safe Internet should be ensured, in order to facilitate the economic empowerment of women and girls and bridge the digital divide. An environment conducive to working together openly and safely should be established, with a view to building world-class skills for continuous innovation that would generate new and better products and services, promote investment in sustainable infrastructure and develop public-private partnerships.

46. Costa Rica was committed to those principles and would promote them as Chair of the Freedom Online Coalition, which would hold its sixth annual meeting in Costa Rica that month, building on the outcomes of the first multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals and the Technology Facilitation Mechanism. The Coalition would strengthen discussion at the second multi-stakeholder forum in 2017, with a view to bolstering implementation of the 2030 Agenda and other relevant international agreements.

47. **Mr. Ye** Yongfeng (Singapore) said that while digitalization brought serious challenges, including the disruption of business models, job displacement due to

automation, cyberattacks and digital exclusion, it would create new jobs and opportunities. Leveraging the potential additional economic output of the digital economy would be essential to achieving sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

48. In Singapore, the Committee on the Future Economy, established in October 2015, would develop strategies for a vibrant and resilient economy with sustainable growth that would create value and opportunities for all. Three areas had been identified where the digital economy could be leveraged for better development. First, businesses should be supported to adopt new technologies and transform business models to increase competitiveness at home and abroad. A specific package had been introduced in Singapore to help companies adopt robotic solutions to improve productivity. Second, Governments could and should do more to support their people in seizing new job opportunities, which would require collaborating with stakeholders to develop digital talent. His Government had launched life-long learning programmes to provide ICT skills training at all stages of life and career and had invested in young people by organizing coding programmes in schools. Third, data should be collected and used more effectively to improve implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the provision of public services. In Singapore, an integrated map system, developed to help government agencies deliver location-based public services and information, was also used by the private sector and the community. Data analysis improved public transport management, while geospatial technologies could be used to monitor flooding and provide health care and better municipal services. Singapore was committed to helping other developing countries adapt to the future economy by providing technical assistance through the Singapore Cooperation Programme.

49. **Mr. Sobral Duarte** (Brazil) said that beyond their role in education, gender equality and infrastructure, highlighted in the 2030 Agenda, ICTs were a powerful and transformative tool that could foster economic growth, social inclusion and environmentally-friendly solutions. Their potential would not be fully realized, however, unless they served humanity as a whole. Although efforts to bridge the digital divide between and within countries were crucial, that divide was widening, as was inequality in general. The majority of the poor remained excluded from the benefits of ICTs, while the lack of broadband access posed a critical challenge worldwide. The situation went against the spirit and letter of the 2030 Agenda and must be reversed. Concrete ways in which ICTs could contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals should be identified. In that regard, Brazil supported a prominent profile for ICTs within the Technology Facilitation Mechanism.

50. Brazil upheld and applied the multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance out of the belief that all Internet-related issues could and should be broadly discussed. Distinct issues might require specific frameworks, however, taking into account the differentiated roles and responsibilities associated with the various stakeholders. It was important to continue the balanced implementation of the two processes established by the World Summit. Brazil welcomed the progress achieved at the Internet Governance Forum and hoped that subsequent meetings of the Forum would produce results of interest to a broader set of actors, including those not traditionally linked to it. Implementation of the concept of enhanced cooperation, in compliance with the mandate of the 10-year review of the World Summit, should be jointly advanced with the aim of improving mechanisms to address international public policies pertaining to the Internet. Both processes were mutually reinforcing and could contribute to a more harmonious evolution of the Internet governance ecosystem. While the results of the overall review of implementation of World Summit outcomes by the General Assembly and the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals were a signal of progress, much remained to be done. All countries and peoples must have the access to the information society, and capacity to participate in it as both consumers and producers of technologies and content that addressed their needs.

51. **Mr. Raja Zaib Shah** (Malaysia) said that he recognized the potential of ICTs to accelerate growth, eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development, and their role as critical enablers of economic development and investment. The Eleventh Malaysia Plan had launched a vision of Malaysia as an advanced economy and inclusive nation. In an effort to turn Malaysia into a competitive regional technology hub, more than 1.5 billion Malaysian ringgit had been

allocated to initiatives under the plan. Four main strategies would drive ICT: re-energizing the ICT industry, ensuring adequate human capital, improving ICT infrastructure and pursuing digital inclusion. Malaysia was committed to providing high-speed Internet in urban, suburban and rural areas. The inclusive adaptation of ICT solutions would mobilize a future generation equipped with the skills to thrive in a digital economy and participate in economic growth. The contribution of the digital economy to gross domestic product (GDP) had increased in 2015 and was almost at the 18.2 per cent target set for attainment by 2020.

52. Malaysia planned to make civil servants, fresh graduates and young minds agents of change. As technology became more pervasive in everyday life, communities would connect across the world, thereby improving their global job prospects. Two national programmes had been launched in 2015 to help citizens earn additional income from the digital economy. One worked with global and local organizations to develop a crowdsourcing ecosystem in Malaysia, while the other was designed to develop digital entrepreneurship and know-how.

53. **Mr. Kafle** (Nepal) said that, as a landlocked, mountainous and least developed country emerging from a devastating earthquake, Nepal pinned great hope on ICTs. Advances and innovations in ICT offered huge potential for developing countries. The 2030 Agenda aptly recognized the potential of ICT to reduce poverty and inequality, accelerate human progress and social development, bridge the digital divide and develop knowledge societies. In that regard, it was critical to achieve target 9.c under Sustainable Development Goal 9 on providing universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries as early as possible. The least developed countries would benefit substantially from the creation of the Technology Bank in 2017.

54. The rapid pace of innovation in ICTs had more to offer, through knowledge societies, than imagined. Synergies were needed between innovations in the information society and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Realizing the full potential of innovations in technology and their transfer to developing countries, particularly least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, would accelerate progress towards the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. The devastating earthquake in Nepal in 2015 had emphasized the role of ICTs in minimizing loss during such disasters, as highlighted in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. ICT-enabled early warning systems, real-time information dissemination and post-disaster rescue and recovery campaigns should be promoted as much as possible.

55. The international community should work together to implement the World Summit vision of a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society, with more construction collaboration among Governments and other stakeholders to reduce the digital divide within and between countries. Since ICT encompassed all areas of human activity, it required the involvement and cooperation of a wide array of stakeholders, including the private sector and the information society, to harness its potential for the betterment of people and planet. Access to digital opportunity for all, including the least developed countries and poor and marginalized communities in all countries, was crucial to ensuring that no one was left behind.

56. **Mr. Al-Nuaimi** (United Arab Emirates) said that his Government recognized the importance of furthering discussion of ICTs at the international level in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the World Summit outcomes. His delegation and the delegation of Latvia had co-facilitated the high-level meeting on the overall review of implementation of the World Summit outcomes by the General Assembly in December 2015. That meeting had reaffirmed the important role of ICTs as a driver for sustainable development and a tool to support innovation and economic transformation. His Government had invested heavily in the ICT sector, building an enabling environment that allowed it to thrive and set local and regional trends. National ICT development underpinned the country's emergence as a logistics and shipping hub, global finance centre and leader in government service delivery. Independent telecom operators, public-private partnerships and openness to foreign investment were key to the expansion of the ICT sector and the economy. In its 2021 Vision, the Government had set an ambitious goal of providing world-class public infrastructure and government services, and building a knowledge-based economy.

57. The United Arab Emirates attached great importance to achieving gender balance among Internet users and enhancing women's participation in ICT as users and content creators, entrepreneurs, innovators and leaders. It also believed that the Internet should be used to tackle the root causes of extremism by enhancing the participation of- society, encouraging critical thinking and moderation, and creating economic opportunities. In that regard, the United Arab Emirates had cooperated with the United States of America to establish the Sawab Centre, a shining example of a social communication centre that responded to the ideas of extremists and terrorists and urged constructive debate. In conclusion, he stressed the importance of infrastructure development and knowledge and technology transfer, and reaffirmed the World Summit vision of a people-centred, development-oriented information society.

58. **Mr. De Lara Rangel** (Mexico) said that while humankind faced many challenges, the 2030 Agenda provided a strategy for tackling them and ICTs stood out among the many tools available to overcome them. ICTs could bring fresh solutions to the problems of development in a context of globalization and were key to achieving sustained and inclusive economic growth, in particular through competitive economies and access to information and knowledge, especially for developing countries and the least developed countries. Cooperation between all stakeholders should be boosted to ensure effective implementation of the outcomes of the Geneva and Tunis phases of the World Summit through international, regional and national partnerships between stakeholders, including public-private partnerships, and thematic platforms at the national and regional levels. As stressed in the outcome document of the 10-year review, achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals was dependent on bridging the digital divide and, in particular, on universalizing Internet access for the least developed countries and increasing the reach of ICTs.

59. Mexico remained committed to ICT-supported development; access to ICT would expand the digital economy and promote the international community's work on sustainable development. In that regard, his Government had promoted the adoption of the international Open Data Charter. The Internet Governance Forum had become a unique arena for interchange and debate among stakeholders in the Internet ecosystem, including Governments, the private sector, civil society, the technology sector and the academic community. The work of the Forum had shown the importance of collaborative, decentralized Internet management and the multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance. Mexico welcomed the renewal of the Forum's mandate and noted its importance to implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Mexico would host the eleventh annual meeting of the Forum in Guadalajara, Jalisco, in December.

60. **Mr. Yacouba** (Niger), noting that ICTs could have a multiplier effect and were the pathway to bridging the digital divide and accelerating attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, said that Niger had strengthened governance of its telecommunications and ICT sector. It had established a dedicated ministerial department and a separate regulatory authority, adopted a sector-specific policy and introduced amendments to the legislative and regulatory framework. In terms of digital infrastructure, services and applications, it had deployed a national fibre optic backbone, strengthened international and cross-border broadband connections, implemented e-government services — including ICT services within the public sector — and connected schools to provide Internet access to students, teachers and the community.

61. Niger hoped to bridge the digital divide by providing 100 per cent coverage for telephone services, with a 70 per cent service uptake; drafting an action plan to implement its telecommunications and ICT sector policy; completing international fibre optic connections and the national backbone; and improving governance of the sector. Locally adapted applications and content would be created and ICT entrepreneurship would be encouraged among young people. Niger had already established a higher education institute for telecommunications and joint steering committees to pilot a new ICT development initiative, and was implementing an IT training and awareness programme under the National Environment Programme for Sustainable Development.

62. **Ms. Kharashun** (Belarus) said that, efforts to bridge the digital divide between developed and developing countries and within countries between different social and demographic groups should focus on bridging the standardization gap between countries, tackling the compatibility and functional compliance of

new technologies and ensuring equal access to developments in ICT. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) should play a key role in implementing the World Summit principle of ensuring developing countries' access to innovative developments. Given the prevalence of the Internet in all economic sectors and its growing dependence on stable, predictable and accessible networks, Internet governance must be non-discriminatory and carried out jointly by the entire international community with the equal participation of all States. It should be understandable, transparent and neutral.

63. Member States should boost United Nations efforts to develop ICT and its use for development and e-government. Consultative and technical assistance to boost the economy and competitiveness of Member States, including middle-income countries, must continue. ICT should be viewed in the broader context of access to technology — including energy, industrial and agricultural technologies — and as a key to achieving sustainable development.

64. **Mr. Andanje** (Kenya) said that, in view of the need to significantly increase access to ICTs and provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in the least developed countries by 2020 (A/71/67-E/2016/51, paras. 17 and 107), the first multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals had underscored the importance of science, technology and innovation as great levellers. However, while ICT was enabling access to global markets, enhancing wealth creation and ultimately leading to poverty eradication, developing countries had not fared well in the development of ICT.

65. Kenya regarded ICT as critical to productivity, competitiveness and a knowledge-based economy. Considerable resources had been invested in creating an enabling environment for ICT growth and a separate Ministry had been established for ICT matters. Most government services were available through ICT, 1.7 million Kenyans had registered on a platform that provided 115 services, and one-stop-shop centres would soon be available in all 47 counties. The M-PESA mobile money system had received global accolades and had transformed the banking sector. It had ushered in innovative mobile banking products and ensured that no one was left behind by providing banking services to most Kenyans who had not previously had access to a bank. Efforts must now focus on infrastructure, human resource development, stakeholder participation and an appropriate regulatory framework. Kenya Vision 2030 would address the legal and regulatory environment to stimulate ICT-related business.

66. **Mr. Liu** Jun (China) said that constant advances in ICT, including mobile broadband Internet, cloud computing and the Internet of Things, were making daily life more convenient and enhancing people's ability to understand and change the world. Those technologies were creating social and economic benefits while promoting sustainable social and economic development. The significance of ICT to achieving sustainable development at national, regional and global levels should be better understood. As recognized by the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, innovation with ICT at its core could be strengthened to fully realize the role of ICT in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

67. Although significant progress had been made in building the information society, the digital divide between and within countries remained. Promoting the global diffusion of ICT to bridge that divide would help to develop better opportunities for all. In its efforts to bridge the digital divide and implement the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, China would prioritize developing countries by providing training opportunities. It aimed to found a global development partnership to promote ICT for sustainable development and strengthen North-South and South-South cooperation. The exchange of experience and technology transfer would be employed to support talent development and institutional capacity-building. Bridging the digital divide was the only way to ensure that all people and all countries could share in the latest advances in ICT for global sustainable development.

68. In China, ICT was promoted as a path to industrialization and progress, including in urbanization and agricultural modernization. The Chinese ICT infrastructure was constantly improving, in particular through increased numbers of fixed broadband, mobile phone and mobile broadband users with third or fourth generation connections. ICT was

increasingly used in all sectors and was playing a greater role in the country's economic development. China stood ready to share its experiences with other countries and would host the third World Internet Conference in November.

69. **Mr. Alemu** (Ethiopia) said that, despite considerable progress in ICT, mobile expansion, the widening digital divide between and within countries, between rural and urban areas and the gender digital divide were causes of concern. Developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, lagged behind in harnessing digital opportunities to achieve inclusive and sustainable development. While Africa had made progress, especially in setting up legal and policy frameworks, broadband deployment and Internet access remained insufficient. The rapid development of social media had created opportunities for social inclusion and interaction; and yet it had also brought new challenges, including the abuse of social media to instigate violence and fuel social discord. It was vital to prevent the abuse of ICT by providing technical assistance to developing countries, particularly the least developed countries. United Nations agencies should improve their understanding of the rapid changes in ICT and support the efforts of developing countries to harness digital opportunities for long-term development needs and priorities. In view of the key role of ICTs in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, a strong synergy between the World Summit process and the 2030 Agenda was essential. The multi-stakeholder approach was the only way to harness the potential of ICT for sustainable development.

70. Given the enabling role of ICT in poverty eradication, his Government's ICT policy acknowledged the roles of the State, the private sector and civil society and targeted priority sectors, such as agriculture, health and education. ICT infrastructure had been built to improve the accessibility and quality of ICT-related services and an Ethiopian information technology park — Ethio ICT Village — had been opened to attract local and foreign investment. The park was designed to create a favourable business environment, harness the creativity of the private sector and generate job opportunities, particularly for young people. Already, it was facilitating technology transfer, including through public-private partnerships. E-government services were being expanded to ensure seamless connectivity throughout the country. The successful implementation of ICT policy had increased the number of mobile subscribers from 0.5 million in 2005 to 40 million in 2015, and the goal was to increase that figure to 103 million mobile subscribers by 2020. However, limited finance and capacity remained challenges. In conclusion, he welcomed the launch of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism.

71. **Mr. Hajiyev** (Azerbaijan) said that Azerbaijan recognized the critical role of ICTs in development. One of its long-term goals was to invest oil sector revenue in developing non-oil sectors and human resources to create a technologically capable, competitive and innovative economy. A national strategy had been adopted on the development of the information society. In 2013, Azerbaijan had launched its first telecommunications satellite and it planned to launch the second in 2017.

72. The Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway, established at the initiative of Azerbaijan and supported by a special General Assembly resolution, would serve as a major element in the East-West transport corridor and facilitate direct access to the Internet backbone and information resources in 20 countries of the region. General Assembly resolution 67/298 had established the Eurasian Connectivity Alliance, which would bring together Governments, private sector and international development organizations to expand ICT networks and access. The growing importance and rapid evolution of the information society posed certain challenges, such as the risk of greater inequality arising from digital divides and threats to personal security and privacy. The cooperation of all stakeholders in addressing those challenges was critical.

73. **Mr. Adeoye** (Nigeria),welcoming positive trends in connectivity and affordability, said that ICTs held tremendous potential for the achievement of internationally agreed development goals in developing countries, and realization of the 2030 Agenda. ICT had brought progress to African countries, including growth in investment in national and international broadband infrastructure, improved connectivity, increased bandwidth and e-governance services. Mobile telephone ownership had increased rapidly, while some African countries were positioning themselves to export ICT goods and services.

Broadband deployment in Africa had not kept pace with other regions, however. Mobile telephone ownership had increased rapidly, while some African countries were positioning themselves to export ICT goods and services. Broadband deployment in Africa had not kept pace with other regions, however. He noted the widening gap in digital and broadband access between developing and developed countries, and the adverse impact of difficult economic circumstances on ICT investment and diffusion. Concerted efforts were needed to redress the digital divide, including the gender digital divide, to ensure that Africans did not miss out on economic opportunities that depended on high-quality communications.

74. People-centred, inclusive and development-oriented ICT required a greater emphasis on reducing the cost of ICTs, including broadband connectivity and capacity-building, in developing countries. The quality and quantity of telecommunications infrastructure in developing countries should be upgraded to maximize the dividends of ICT. In Nigeria, ICT infrastructure had been provided with a view to boosting job creation, business productivity and growth and wealth creation. The Government was offering incentives for the local ICT industry to deliver on its potential in such critical sectors as housing, transport, banking and research and development. The introduction of the Global System for Mobile Communications in 2001 had led to significant growth in mobile subscriptions, which had reached almost 190 million. He welcomed the outcome of the 10-year World Summit review process and its call for stronger synergies between the World Summit, the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. He also welcomed the active engagement of the United Nations system in promoting the use of ICT for security, knowledge, propagation and economic development. Maximizing the benefits of ICTs required improved capacity-building in policy and regulation, including more systematic data gathering and analysis to promote development outcomes in the application of ICTs.

75. **Mr. Biljeek** (Bahrain) said that his Government considered ICT a particularly important topic, given its significance for economic development. Bahrain was a leader in its region for e-government and provided services to all through a unified online portal. In 2015, the Prime Minister of Bahrain had received an ICTs in Sustainable Development Award from ITU. Bahrain was ranked first in the Middle East and eighteenth worldwide in the United Nations e-Government Survey. It was also ranked third in ICT promotion by the 2016 Global Information Technology Report of the World Economic Forum. It had just hosted its second United Nations-sponsored visit from representatives of least developed countries eager to learn from its ICT experience, and looked forward to becoming an ICT hub for the entire Middle East.

76. **Ms. Sall-Beye** (International Telecommunication Union (ITU)) said that half the world's population — more than 3 billion people — remained offline, the majority of them women. The *2016 State of Broadband Report*, produced by ITU and UNESCO, had shown that the gender digital divide was growing and that action was needed to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality. ITU estimated that there were 250 million fewer women online than men. The gender gap had grown in 2016 and remained largest in the least developed countries, where 90 per cent of the population was unconnected. At current rates of progress, far from achieving the target to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in the least developed countries by 2020, only 20 per cent of people in those countries would be reached by that deadline.

77. The gender gap could be observed in every region of the world in terms of Internet access and the ICT workforce. Empowering girls and women would solve the predicted shortfall of over 2 million jobs in the technology sector in the next five years. The need for action had led to the announcement of EQUALS: The Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age, which was expected to become a global movement where women and girls were equal participants in the digital technology revolution. The Global Partnership directly supported progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 5, and many other Sustainable Development Goals, by enabling women to be creators and innovative leaders in a modern and connected world. Its overall goal was to bring together global stakeholders — Governments, international organizations, civil society, the private sector, philanthropic foundations and academia — to build on existing resources, networks and expertise and scale up programmes to close the gender digital divide and empower women and girls through ICTs. Its three main areas of action were access, skills and leadership. She

called on all delegations to join the Global Partnership and ensure progress on gender equality online. Without universal and affordable access to the Internet, there was no chance of achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.

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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 17 October 2016, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Nipomici (Republic of Moldova)

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In the absence of Mr. Djani (Indonesia), Ms. Nipomici (Republic of Moldova), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 23: Eradication of poverty and other development issues (A/71/173)

(a) Implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) (A/71/181)

(b) Industrial development cooperation (A/71/264)

1. **Ms. Wenyan Yang** (Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) (A/71/181), said that the report reviewed progress made by countries to eradicate poverty in all its forms and by the United Nations system in implementing the objectives of the Decade, examined the challenges that remained and provided a number of key recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly.

2. While extreme poverty and hunger had declined in all regions, daunting challenges remained in Africa and the least developed countries; there had concurrently been an increase in relative poverty in developed countries, especially in Europe. The report highlighted the substantial progress made across the world towards universal education, greater access to quality health care services, gender equality, women's empowerment and extended social protection coverage. As countries faced a number of challenges in generating full employment and decent work for all, the report identified a number of policy priorities for poverty eradication and employment creation. Finally, the report provided a review of the United Nations system's implementation of the Decade, based on consultations with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, as well as regional commissions.

3. **Mr. Gilabert** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)), introducing the report of the Director General of UNIDO (A/71/264), said that the importance of industrial development as a driver for economic growth was now recognized by all and addressed directly by Sustainable Development Goal 9, and indirectly by Goals 1, 8, 12, 13 and 17.

4. The first section of the report highlighted recent trends in industrial development examining the metric of world manufacturing value added (MVA), as well as manufactured exports, technology and the impact of industry on employment. Manufacturing production had rapidly developed in emerging economies, as many companies had relocated to benefit from lower production costs and growing markets. Exports and investment promotion had played a predominant role in long-term growth by creating a virtuous circle of investment, innovation and poverty reduction. African labour had tended to move from agriculture towards services; even though services had had much higher productivity than agriculture, overall productivity gains over time remained very limited. Technology continued to play a major role in industrial development.

5. In its second section, the report described the interconnections that existed among the various Goals dealing with industrial development. Inclusive and sustainable industrial development had direct and indirect implications for all other Goals, including Goal 17 on the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

6. The main priorities of UNIDO were: creating shared prosperity, in particular through the development of agro-industries, empowering women and youth in productive activities and human security in post-crisis situations; advancing economic competitiveness by promoting small and medium-sized enterprises, trade capacity-building, and technology and investment; and safeguarding the environment by promoting clean and renewable energies, smart cities and the implementation of various multilateral agreements on the environment. Those priorities were pursued through the four areas of activity of UNIDO: technical cooperation, industrial policy research, analysis and advising, normative functions and the creation of partnerships for knowledge transfer. UNIDO likewise engaged in cross-cutting industrial statistical activities, standard setting and the exchange of information and best practices. The further development of partnerships would be key for UNIDO; it had therefore organized three forums on inclusive and sustainable industrial development during the reporting period.

7. While continuing to work closely with the United Nations system and especially the Economic and

Social Council on operational activities for development, UNIDO had ensured that its strategic planning cycles were aligned with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

8. **Mr. Rahman** (World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization on the promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection (A/71/173), said that 33 Member States and territories had responded to the survey circulated by UNWTO; the responses received were representative in terms of both geographical coverage and development levels.

9. The development of tourism had been consistent across the globe, growing above average for a sixth consecutive year despite a slow and uneven economic recovery, health scares and rising geopolitical challenges. In 2015, a record 1.186 billion people had travelled the world, or 50 million more than the previous year. Forecasts predicted that by 2030, the number of international tourists would reach 1.8 billion. Tourism had thus become one of the leading sectors of the global economy, accounting for 10 per cent of the world's gross domestic product (GDP). For 2016, UNWTO forecasted international tourist arrivals to grow between 3.5 per cent and 4.5 per cent, with growth expected to be stronger in Asia and the Pacific, the Americas and Europe, in that order. Tourism was a transformative force that contributed to the three pillars of sustainable development: social, economic and environmental. It had the potential to create employment opportunities and help eradicate poverty.

10. **Mr. Iziraren** (Morocco) said that the report of UNWTO demonstrated the importance that sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, had played so far in achieving sustainable development, and in particular poverty eradication, in an integrated and holistic manner, while also empowering women, especially in rural areas. He requested further information about South-South cooperation, which could also play a role in promoting sustainable tourism and ecotourism; and measurement and data, which were a means of determining how tourism was contributing to sustainable development.

11. **Mr. Rahman** (UNWTO) said that UNWTO was focused on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as other cross-cutting areas such as women's empowerment. It greatly valued South-South cooperation, and had recently been in discussions with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation to further develop such cooperation in the context of sustainable tourism. With regard to data measurement, an issue that was extremely important for promoting sustainability in the tourism sector, with a view to achieving the Goals, UNWTO had been providing support to the efforts of Member States to collect, analyse and utilize data. More data meant better policy formulation and impact assessments for sustainable tourism.

12. **Ms. Niyomthai** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, remained the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. Despite the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, many member States of the Group were still plagued by poverty: the number of people in sub-Saharan Africa living on less than US$ 1.25 a day had actually increased, and there were growing levels of inequality both within and among countries. It was therefore crucial to evaluate and follow up on the implementation of the Decade by strengthening coordination, coherence and synergies and identifying the way forward. Collective efforts must be exponentially multiplied, in particular through the proclamation of a third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2028), aimed at closing the gap between policies and countries' capacities to achieve the ultimate goal.

13. The diverse needs and challenges faced by developing countries, in particular African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, countries in conflict and post-conflict situations, middle-income countries and countries and peoples living under foreign occupation must be recognized. The Governments of developing countries must be enabled to formulate their own development strategies and policy tools, in line with their national priorities and circumstances. The support of the United Nations system and other international partners, was crucial in order to catalyse structural changes through people-centred economic and social policies that promoted

inclusive growth, job creation, investment in education, health care and infrastructure, the creation of a social safety net and the empowerment of women.

14. Building upon the lessons learned during the implementation of the Decade and of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), work must be conducted to improve data and monitoring systems, harness partnerships and foster the global exchange of ideas to eradicate poverty and create decent jobs. The United Nations system, in consultation with the international financial institutions, must develop transparent measurements of progress on sustainable development that went beyond per capita income.

15. As the provision and mobilization of adequate and predictable resources remained one of the main challenges for developing countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the means of financing set out in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development were of great importance, and it was crucial for all official development assistance (ODA) commitments to be fulfilled. An enabling international environment could be achieved through the provision of additional financing resources, technology transfer on concessional and preferential terms, capacity-building and pro-development trade policies, as well as the equitable and effective participation of developing countries in global economic governance.

16. Inclusive and sustainable industrial development was an essential part of a comprehensive strategy of structural economic transformation aimed at eradicating poverty and supporting sustained economic growth, as well as the realization of many of the Goals. Since UNIDO was an important provider of specialized services for the promotion of inclusive and sustainable industrial development, including the building of productive capacities, the Group of 77 and China called on it to organize global dialogues and to promote multi-stakeholder partnerships with a view to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. However, it expressed deep concern at the continued withdrawal of developed countries from UNIDO and called on all countries to return or maintain their membership in that organization.

17. **Ms. Young** (Belize), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (A/71/181) told an all too familiar story of uneven and regionally disparate global progress. The Caribbean faced a distinct challenge amongst developing countries, since poverty as traditionally measured, as well as growing multidimensional poverty, existed alongside persistent low growth and the incipient erosion of human development gains. In CARICOM States, poverty disproportionately affected young people, women, older persons, persons with disabilities, small-scale farmers, unskilled workers, indigenous populations, single-parent households and large families; it was predominately a rural phenomenon, with pockets of poverty in urban and inner city communities resulting from internal migration.

18. At the macrolevel, the determinants of poverty included low growth rates, inequitable income distribution, low productivity, a lack of competitiveness in the productive sectors, ineffective economic and social policies, exogenous shocks and limited human capital. At the microlevel, the determinants included under- or unemployment, low education levels, poor health, ethnic and gender inequalities and social exclusion. The CARICOM region had adopted a number of strategic multidimensional plans with the aim of tackling poverty at the State, household and individual levels, addressing both macro and microdeterminants.

19. CARICOM States were nonetheless aware of their limitations, given their geography, size, capacity constraints and open and trade-dependent economies. As small, low-lying islands, they suffered disproportionately from the consequences of climate change; at times, they had limited ability to absorb even the help that they desperately needed. Much as they bore the burden of climate change caused by the industrial actions of other countries, CARICOM States also bore the deleterious consequences of economic and financial policies to which they had not consented. In addition, the de-risking trend in the financial sector threatened their survival.

20. The 2030 Agenda and other internationally agreed commitments provided a powerful new toolkit for economic, social and environmental justice, as well as a multidimensional approach to poverty eradication. The approach must also be universal, coordinated,

integrated and coherent at all levels. The challenge of implementation would require the alignment of national plans with the 2030 agenda; adequate funding and other means of implementation; and the commitment of all countries, stakeholders and institutions to the universal achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

21. As many global policies presented obstacles to the sustainable development of CARICOM States, CARICOM had identified four areas for greater coherence between the national and international levels: tax cooperation, financial inclusion, debt sustainability, and climate change policies and finance.

22. The final year of the Decade was an opportunity for the United Nations and other multilateral institutions to make a strong case against the de-risking trend in the international banking sector; to enhance intergovernmental cooperation on tax matters; to revise the metrics used to assess development; and to reassess the multilateral approach to debt sustainability so that highly indebted countries with limited domestic resource mobilization capacity could access the necessary support. The United Nations could play an important role in spurring momentum for action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to improve resilience to the impacts of climate change, and should also support mitigation efforts in small island developing States. Poverty was not unidimensional; the international community now had new tools that, if effectively applied, could ensure that the benefits of globalization were evenly distributed and that no person or country would suffer from the poverty of opportunity.

23. **Mr. Cortorreal** (Dominican Republic), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that according to the report "Social Panorama of Latin America 2015" of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, nearly 175 million people in that region lived in poverty, while another 75 million lived in extreme poverty. Although the region had met most of the Millennium Development Goals and several countries had achieved middle-income status, significant gaps and disparities remained, both between and within countries.

24. One of the major challenges was technological gaps. There was a critical need for dissemination and transfer of innovation and new technologies, in particular of environmentally sound technologies, on favourable terms, including concessional and preferential terms.

25. Reiterating the commitment of CELAC to the overarching goal of eradicating poverty, he emphasized the need for an enabling international economic environment with mutually supportive trade, monetary and financial systems and enhanced global economic governance. It was vital to respect each country's policy space and leadership as well as the sovereign right of States to determine the appropriate use and management of their natural resources, which provided important support for economic development, social justice and well-being.

26. Sustainable development should be addressed from an integrated and holistic perspective. Piecemeal approaches to poverty diagnosis and reduction, as well as the prioritizing of certain dimensions of development to the exclusion of others, distorted the true situation, in particular that of middle-income countries. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda had made clear that ODA and other forms of concessional financing were still essential for some middle-income countries. CELAC called on the United Nations system and international financial institutions to develop transparent measurements of progress in sustainable development that went beyond per capita income. Such indicators should recognize poverty in all its forms and dimensions and should include the social, economic and environmental dimensions of domestic output as well as structural gaps at all levels.

27. Sustainable development could not be attained without including vulnerable groups such as indigenous and other tribal populations, individuals of African descent, women, older persons, persons with disabilities, migrants, children and adolescents. Equity, social and financial inclusion and access to fair credit were central to ensuring overall access to justice, citizen participation and a dignified life for all. Sustainable development would not be possible without genuine equality between men and women. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda and other international agreements must be people-centred, human rights based and with a crosscutting gender perspective.

28. High-quality, timely, reliable and disaggregated data were an essential input for transparent decision-

making and for setting policy at all levels. CELAC reaffirmed the central role of follow-up and review and the strengthening of national and regional data systems. The availability of data disaggregated on the basis of income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and geographical location and other relevant characteristics would increase the visibility of social and regional disparities. CELAC called for international cooperation and the strengthening of national capacities for that purpose.

29. **Mr. Momen** (Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that that the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) (A/71/181) provided insight into the challenges that continued to impede poverty eradication efforts. Although the overall level of extreme poverty in the least developed countries had declined, progress had been extremely uneven. The least developed countries continued to be the worst affected by conflicts, climate change, disease and economic shocks, and had been unable to achieve most of the MDGs. It was particularly disturbing that some 24 million children of primary school age in least developed countries were not attending school.

30. In order to graduate from least-developed status, the least developed countries needed to invest in their agricultural and industrial sectors. They would also have to pay special attention to women and youth. The private sector should be the primary engine of growth, but coherent policy interventions could help to promote equality, food security, job creation and increased income. While the onus of development lay primarily with the least developed countries themselves, enhanced global support — including ODA, foreign direct investment (FDI) and duty-free, quota-free market access — could be instrumental in advancing development and reducing poverty. He welcomed the commitment of the international community to expedited operationalization of the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries.

31. Promising synergies had been created between the 2030 Agenda and the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020. He urged development partners and the United Nations system to comply with the provisions of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The least developed countries needed additional and predictable support from the international community to address the impacts of climate change and disasters, and placed great importance on the implementation of the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. He also called on the international community to ensure safe, regular and orderly migration to help the least developed countries reap the benefits of migration as an enabler for development.

32. Many least developed countries had economies that were largely dependent the export of one or a few primary commodities. They needed help with financing, capacity-building and technology transfer in order to diversify and achieve sustainable industrialization as called for by Goal 9 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Partnerships between least developed countries and UNIDO should be anchored in national ownership and leadership. Lessons learned from implementation of the MDGs and of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty should be drawn on in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and ridding the world of poverty.

33. **Mr. Tuy** (Cambodia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the ASEAN-United Nations Plan of Action for 2016-2020 adopted by the ASEAN-United Nations summit held in Vientiane on 7 September 2016 had affirmed both the 2030 Agenda and the ASEAN Community Vision 2025. At a meeting with the Secretary-General held in New York on 24 September 2016, the ASEAN Ministers for Foreign Affairs had emphasized the need for a holistic approach to sustainable development that balanced the three pillars and identified priority areas where complementarities could be enhanced. Within the South-East Asia region, ASEAN had established a number of integrated, cross-sectoral approaches to reduce the development gap, empower communities and engage stakeholders.

34. Poverty eradication was intimately linked with rural development. The ASEAN Framework Action Plan on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (2011-2015) focused on cross-sectoral collaboration to achieve a convergence between rural development and poverty eradication initiatives at the local, national and regional levels. The ASEAN-help-ASEAN approach promoted the sharing of best practices. Community

empowerment was being advanced by microfinance, entrepreneurship and women's empowerment strategies, as well as the promotion of local agriculture and fisheries and the development of farming techniques and vocational skills. The ASEAN GO-NGO forum on rural development and poverty eradication had been established as a platform for private-sector and civil-society stakeholders to share information and exchange views.

35. Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and middle-income countries continued to need assistance from developed countries in eradicating poverty. He called on the developed countries to meet the ODA targets of 0.7 per cent of GDP for assistance to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of GDP for assistance to least developed countries. He also stressed the importance of South-South and triangular cooperation as a complement to North-South cooperation.

36. **Ms. Natividad** (Philippines) said that the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (A/71/181) had highlighted the role of inclusive growth and decent work in reducing poverty and promoting development. Her Government's economic agenda envisioned a reduction of almost 10 per cent in the poverty rate over the next six years, and aimed to transform the Philippines into an upper middle-income country by 2022. Given that some three quarters of the world's poor lived in middle-income countries, she urged a more nuanced approach to the middle-income country classification that moved beyond the sole criterion of GDP. Her delegation was pleased that the Secretary-General's report had made reference to the Multidimensional Poverty Index, which employed an approach similar to the one being developed by her country's national statistics authority.

37. The Philippines' Vision 2040 plan was anchored in a people-centred approach that rebalanced growth and development opportunities across regions, sectors and socioeconomic groups. Its Accelerated and Sustainable Anti-Poverty Program aimed to help lagging regions and rural areas by facilitating the transport of goods to cities and even overseas and to promote access to employment and to information and communications technology (ICT). The international community needed to draw on the lessons learned from the implementation of the Decade, particularly with respect to improving data and monitoring systems, harnessing partnerships, fostering the global exchange of experiences and showcasing effective anti-poverty and job-creation initiatives.

38. **Mr. Sinha** (India) said that despite substantial progress in recent years, poverty eradication continued to be the greatest challenge to humanity. Inequality both among and within nations was stark, and continued to have wide ramifications that included conflict and large-scale migration. Rapid economic growth had allowed millions of people in his country, which contained one sixth of the global population, to overcome poverty. In particular, India had made innovative use of ICT to ensure financial inclusion. Over 1 billion people had been issued a biometric-based Aadhaar identity card that allowed access to a wide range of e-services, some 250 million people had opened bank accounts through the Jan-Dhan financial services programme, and smartphone applications were being widely used. The Aadhaar system was especially effective in reaching poor, vulnerable and rural populations that might otherwise find themselves marginalized, and in improving the efficiency of welfare schemes while plugging leakages.

39. His Government was also employing ICT to improve access to education, healthcare, drinking water and sanitation and was developing geographical information management systems for water, crop inventory and other natural resources and early warning for natural disasters. It was investing heavily in both the agricultural and industrial sectors, while at the same time providing vocational training to match workers with suitable employment. It had also instituted reforms to harmonize tax regulations among India's different States. Several international studies, including the 2016 World Bank report on poverty and shared prosperity, had recognized India's successes in lifting people out of poverty.

40. Both the MDGs and the Sustainable Development Goals had called for genuine global partnerships; growing international concern over the fairness of the global financial systems was reflected in the ongoing debate over reforming the Bretton Woods institutions. He urged the developed States to honour their ODA commitments and welcomed the Secretary-General's

warning that additional financing for any other purpose should not come at the expense of development funding. His country would continue to expand its South-South partnerships, especially with least developed countries, including in Africa, and small island developing States. He urged the Committee to leverage its convening power through the quadrennial comprehensive policy review process to ensure that the 2030 Agenda's relentless focus on poverty would be reflected throughout the United Nations development system.

41. **Ms. Pham** Thi Kim Anh (Viet Nam) said that poverty eradication had always been at the heart of development efforts in her country, which was proud to have halved its poverty rate. Although the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty had seen a global reduction in poverty, progress had been uneven both within and among countries. Poverty was an increasingly complex and multifaceted phenomenon, with certain groups marginalized because of socioeconomic status, gender or other demographic reasons. Many people who had managed to climb out of poverty were at risk of falling back due to economic or climate-related shocks. Lifting people permanently out of poverty required addressing its root causes. Decent jobs needed to be created to stimulate consumption, saving and investment. Structural transformation should be instituted to foster global competitiveness and increase living standards. Enhanced social protection and public services and the promotion of gender equality would help to build resilience to shocks and ensure that progress was more evenly distributed.

42. The importance of national policies should not eclipse the importance of international cooperation. She called for a rules-based, open and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system, and urged donor countries to deliver on their ODA commitments as reiterated in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

43. **Mr. Sareer** (Maldives) said that any discussion of the 2030 Agenda needed to focus first and foremost on poverty and hunger. His country was an MDG success story. Successive Governments in the Maldives had made significant investments in health, education and food subsidies, which had paid off in terms of human development. In particular, the Maldives was working to harness the potential of its youth by promoting skills-based learning and vocational training. Several initiatives had been launched to broaden employment opportunities for the almost 50 per cent of the population that was under the age of 25, including the expansion of tertiary education institutions through public and private investments and the introduction of salaries and scholarships for athletes.

44. Part of his country's boost in GDP had derived from tourism and fishing, two industries that were highly vulnerable to climate and market shocks. Truly sustainable growth would require investment in human development, diversification and resilient infrastructure. In that regard, the Maldives had widened the range of experiences offered by its tourism industry, thereby creating more jobs in local communities, and had established special economic zones to concentrate industry and human capital.

45. His country had repeatedly called for measures of development that went beyond GDP and took into account other factors, including the level of vulnerability to economic and environmental risks that might reverse gains, which was a matter of particular concern for small island developing States. As economists had observed in the wake of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the reconstruction activity that typically followed natural disasters often registered a deceptive rise in GDP that was really a reflection of recovery rather than growth. Another problem with GDP as an exclusive indicator of development was that it recorded overall increases in wealth without regard to equitable distribution.

46. **Ms. Ortez** (Honduras) said that the Latin American region was striving to promote inclusive development that would generate employment opportunities and food security as the fundamental guarantor of access not only to food but also to health services and education. Three elements were key to that commitment: the belief that enhanced well-being and social equality required balanced, fair economic growth that would promote economic and social factors in equal measure; recognition of the need for equitable distribution and of the civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights of the individual; and respect for the diversity, specificity and identity of each region.

47. Her Government had established a number of policies and programmes aimed at creating opportunities and combating poverty and was following the road map set out in its Better Life

Programme. It continued to emphasize production and decent work by repositioning economic policy as the best social policy.

48. It was important to reduce the implementation gaps among countries, in particular with respect to access to financing and barriers to technology transfer. Developed countries needed to fulfil their ODA commitments and to adhere to the principles set out in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda, in particular the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

49. **Ms. Noskova** (Russian Federation) said that the eradication of poverty was rightly the central goal of the 2030 Agenda. However, poverty was multidimensional and could not be defined only on the basis of GDP. Other important factors should be taken into account, including disparities in income and education levels. Middle-income countries offered the best examples of the inadequacy of the existing criteria for assessing poverty, since they accounted for over 50 per cent of the people living below the poverty line. Consequently, her country believed that support provided by the United Nations development system should be differentiated and take into account various factors, in the spirit of the guiding principle of the 2030 Agenda, that no one should be left behind. The Russian Federation was working in conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme to implement rural development projects in Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

50. Poverty led to social tensions and conflict, as was evident in some of the least developed countries, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa. The development of industrial potential could contribute to poverty eradication and do much to boost employment. UNIDO should continue to play an active role in promoting economic diversification, assisting small and medium-sized enterprises and introducing modern technologies and standards. It had already undertaken a number of important initiatives as follow-up to the Lima Declaration on Alternative Development of 2013, and was developing partnerships with Governments and the private sector, which were playing an increasingly important role in promoting sustainable development.

51. In collaboration with UNIDO, the Russian Federation was pursuing infrastructure projects to enhance the competitiveness of the export sector in Armenia, to stimulate the production of construction materials in Kyrgyzstan, to modernize the automobile component industry in Belarus and support the development of its food industry, as well as to assist the development of the agrochemical industry and agricultural engineering in Cuba.

52. **Mr. Chandra** (Indonesia) said that the most successful criminal on earth was poverty. It took lives and robbed people of their choices, security, self-esteem and hope for the future. Like much of the rest of the world, his country had achieved the MDG target of halving poverty. However, the 2030 Agenda's goal of eliminating poverty altogether would require innovative solutions that ensured that people who had climbed out of poverty would not be swallowed back in. All financial flows — private, public, as well as aid — needed to be harnessed, and measures needed to be taken to facilitate credit, enhance productive capacity, improve infrastructure and provide full, productive and decent employment for all. Cooperation should be enhanced at all levels, including the exchange of experience and expertise and technology transfer on mutually agreed terms. It was important to build resilience to shocks such as economic downturns, disease outbreaks and natural disasters. Strategies should be tailored to countries' specific economic, social, cultural, demographic and geographic situations.

53. His country was entering the third phase of its national long-term development plan for 2005-2025, which included a number of poverty reduction strategies. That plan's social protection component provided health assistance for poor people, including poor students, to be distributed by local banks. The national programme for community empowerment was being supported by multilateral development banks. There was also a credit programme to provide government-guaranteed bank loans to microenterprises and cooperatives. With a projected growth rate of over 5 per cent for 2017, his Government hoped to achieve substantial progress in poverty reduction.

54. **Mr. Momeni** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty was a suitable occasion to acknowledge the centrality of poverty eradication to a sustainable future. His

country had made poverty reduction a top national priority, and was implementing a broad range of programmes to promote inclusive growth and reduce inequality. While the poverty level had fallen in absolute terms, relative poverty and non-inclusive growth were continuing challenges. He requested that in the future, the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty should provide greater detail on the Middle East and North Africa region, where some 10 per cent of the population lived in extreme poverty.

55. The international community should focus on global and regional partnerships to create an enabling environment for developing countries, in particular in relation to ODA, FDI, technology transfer, trade facilitation and access to financial resources. Inclusive and sustainable industrial development had an essential role to play in poverty eradication. UNIDO should work to advance infrastructure development and innovation with a view to achieving Goal 9 of the Sustainable Development Goals on building resilient infrastructure, promoting sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation.

56. **Mr. Konfourou** (Mali) said that his country had aligned its 2016-2018 development strategy with the 2030 Agenda with the aim of promoting inclusive and sustainable development and reducing poverty and inequality. The strategy covered five main areas: reinforcing peace and security; strengthening the macroeconomic framework; promoting accelerated, sustainable growth that would generate employment, especially for the poor; ensuring equitable access to basic services; and promoting institutional development and good governance.

57. His Government was deeply committed to the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali in order to resolve the multidimensional crisis that had beset the country since 2012; alongside political and security aspects, the Agreement prioritized national development, with a special focus on the northern area. His Government had established an emergency recovery plan for the period from 2016-2017 and was working on a specific development strategy for the northern regions and the creation of a sustainable development fund that would be established at an initial level of some €457 million.

58. His Government was convinced that gender equality was essential to poverty eradication; in December 2015 the National Assembly had adopted a law to establish quotas requiring at least 30 per cent of all appointed and elective posts to be held by women. Mali had also adopted a national plan of action for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and a national gender policy which had enabled women to be represented at all levels of public administration, including in the armed forces and law enforcement. In addition, efforts were being made to combat violence against women, including female genital mutilation and early marriage. His Government had also introduced targeted programmes for rural women to strengthen their managerial skills and ensure their equal access to all available economic resources. He urged the country's technical and financial partners to honour the commitments they had made at the Brussels and Paris donor conferences held in 2013 and 2015 respectively.

59. **Ms. Karabaeva** (Kyrgyzstan) said that her Government accorded priority to eradicating poverty and, between 2000 and 2013, had succeeded in reducing extreme poverty from 17.8 per cent in 2000 to 2.8 per cent in 2013. In 2014, the World Bank had removed Kyrgyzstan from the list of poor countries and moved it to the category of middle-income developing nations.

60. The level of poverty, however, remained a pressing social problem. Although her Government had introduced a number of economic and social measures aimed at improving the standard of living, progress continued to be slow due to such external factors such as market volatility, climate change and lack of stability as well as geography. Mountains accounted for more than 70 per cent of Kyrgyzstan's total surface area, and the country also lacked access to the sea. Because of their remoteness, inaccessibility, harsh climate conditions and information isolation, landlocked countries had to spend more to maintain a basic standard of living, all of which hindered their ability to eradicate poverty and attain the Sustainable Development Goals.

61. Kyrgyzstan's national strategy for sustainable development for 2013-2017 included a broad range of poverty-reduction initiatives; its programme for the development of the social welfare system for 2015-

2017 aimed at providing targeted assistance to the most vulnerable citizens and promoting employment. In January 2015, monthly benefits to low-income families had been increased by 10.2 per cent. Reforms to the national health system had been undertaken to ensure that every citizen would receive adequate health care regardless of social status or gender. An educational development strategy for the years 2012 to 2020 was also being implemented, and included reforms to the vocational and technical education system designed to prepare qualified specialists for the work force. A new programme had been introduced to address the specific needs of older persons, and pensions would now be annually indexed so as to ensure a minimum standard of living.

62. Her Government believed that the eradication of poverty could not be uncoupled from the elimination of gender inequality. It had adopted a national gender equality strategy for 2012-2020 covering such priorities as women in the economy, education for women and girls, access to justice and political equality. The strategy was intended to empower women across the board, including rural and older women as well as those with compromised health and other vulnerable categories.

63. Finally, her Government urged all donor countries to fulfil their commitments under the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

64. **Ms. Chow** (Singapore) said that a half-century earlier, when her country became independent, three quarters of the population lived in informal housing amid deplorable infrastructure and sanitation. However, decades of hard work had made Singapore a city with a high quality of life, a competitive economy and a sustainable environment.

65. As a small island State whose single and best resource was its human capital, Singapore had stressed universal access to education at the primary and secondary levels. According to the Programme for International Student Assessment of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, even Singaporean students from less affluent backgrounds excelled academically. Her Government had also just launched its SkillsFuture programme, which would promote skills relevant to a changing economy by ensuring that learning continued throughout adulthood. Nine out of 10 Singaporeans owned their own homes, owing to Government-designed long-term savings plans. Her Government had also instituted compulsory medical insurance with subsidies for lower and middle-income families for hospitalization and long-term care, in order to ensure that unexpected medicals bills did not push people into poverty.

66. Singapore had received international assistance when it was a young country. Now it was giving back by sharing its development experience and expertise with other developing countries. It had provided training to over 100,000 government officials from 170 countries through the Singapore Cooperation Programme, and had provided technical assistance to over 40 countries under its third country training programmes.

67. **Mr. Skinner-Klee** (Guatemala) said that despite the numerous commitments made during the First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, especially the middle-income countries, still faced significant structural gaps such as low productivity, lags in health and education services, stubborn gender disparities and territorial inequalities and vulnerability to climate change. Moreover, countries that exported commodities never received fair or remunerative prices; instead, the profits from such trade always went to buyer countries, which dominated the international market. That situation was exacerbated by agricultural subsidies in the industrialized countries, a pattern that perpetuated the cycle of poverty in the developing world and left developing countries in a precarious situation. It was therefore incumbent on the full spectrum of international actors, including both the public and private sectors, to work collectively to advance the 2030 Agenda with the goal of eradicating poverty, keeping in mind the unbalanced, prejudicial conditions of international trade.

68. Guatemala had set in motion its own national development plan, a long-term strategy known as K'atun, Our Guatemala 2032, which had been designed to align its entire development policy with the Sustainable Development Goals. The Plan would serve as a road map to prioritize productive economic activity by promoting access to dignified employment and self-employment along with mechanisms to increase competition with a view to reducing poverty and inequality.

69. His Government was also paying attention to gender equality, especially since women accounted for nearly 43 per cent of the economically active population of Guatemala, according to figures from the National Institute of Statistics. It was therefore important to create better work spaces with equal labour and economic conditions for women.

70. His delegation hoped that the Committee would work jointly with the Third Committee to bring a holistic focus to addressing the whole spectrum of inequality and to develop a tangible response to the structural causes of under-development, marginalization, hunger and poverty, all of which played a role in forcing so many of his country's inhabitants to leave their homes behind and emigrate in search of better opportunities for themselves and their children.

71. **Ms. Zanudin** (Malaysia) said that her country's development agenda emphasized poverty eradication. Malaysia had met the Millennium Development Goal of halving poverty in the year 2000, well ahead of schedule. Since then, poverty had declined to 0.6 per cent in 2014 and hard-core poverty had been virtually eliminated by 2015. However, her country would not rest on its laurels. By introducing its own version of a multidimensional poverty index, the measurement of poverty had been expanded beyond income to reflect other aspects of poverty, namely education, health and quality of life.

72. Her Government was determined to achieve greater inclusivity through initiatives to further uplift the incomes and quality of life of low-income Malaysians, focusing on outcome-based support and productivity-linked assistance including entrepreneurship and skills training, technology adoption, asset ownership and investment in improving connectivity and basic amenities. By 2020, it aimed to double average income for the bottom 40 per cent of households, thereby elevating them into the middle class, raise the participation rate of women in the workforce and improve connectivity, mobility and infrastructure in rural areas.

73. International and regional partnerships were a key element for eradicating poverty on a global scale. Continued support from developed countries was vital to provide the necessary enabling environment and means of implementation for developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and middle-income countries.

74. **Ms. Kalamwina** (Zambia) said that, bearing in mind that more than 50 per cent of the population of the least developed countries lived on less than $1.25 a day, concerted global efforts aimed at eradicating extreme poverty must be prioritized. It was therefore vital to ensure that national development plans were aligned with the 2030 Agenda. Global interventions needed to emphasize a holistic, equitable and far-sighted approach to decision-making at all levels.

75. Her country had implemented multiple interventions to eradicate hunger and extreme poverty in rural areas, where poverty was concentrated. In 2014 it had ramped up the social cash transfer programme it had launched in 2003, expanding it to 31 new districts nationwide, with a total of more than 222,000 households now receiving support. Other strategies designed to accelerate poverty reduction included assistance to farming households, the promotion of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, skills training, a women's empowerment programme and a bursary scheme for students.

76. Zambia was also moving forward with a strategy for industrialization and job creation, with particular emphasis on rural industrialization. So far, six multi-facility economic zones and industrial parks had been created across the country. It was hoped that they would become centres of excellence in value addition, research and development, where Zambian nationals would upgrade their skills both as employees and as operators.

77. **Mr. Kafle** (Nepal) said that poverty reduction had been at the core of his country's development agenda for the past 25 years. His Government had put in place policy and institutional measures with employment generation as the cornerstone of all initiatives. As a result, extreme poverty had been halved over the past decade. Further reductions were envisaged for the coming years, and Nepal had the ambition of graduating from least-developed status by 2022, although the earthquakes of the past year had placed fresh obstacles in the way of that goal. Agriculture was the mainstay of his country's economy. Emphasis had been placed on the empowerment and inclusion of women, youth and indigenous groups. Education was the great equalizer

that could lead to a fairer distribution of development dividends. Sustainable tourism was also important in that regard.

78. However, national efforts alone would not be sufficient, and must be complemented by international support measures which provided least developed countries and landlocked developing countries with enhanced, predictable and sustained financial and technical support tailored to their specific needs. Countries like Nepal which were emerging from conflict and disasters should be accorded priority.

79. **Ms. Hernández Vásquez** (Mexico) said that poverty violated people's dignity, limited their basic rights and freedoms and prevented them from meeting their basic needs, all of which impeded their full integration into society. It was a multidimensional phenomenon which also impacted other areas, including education, health services, nutrition and housing. There was therefore a need for universal instruments to obtain accurate and disaggregated data that went beyond the measurement of per capita income.

80. In view of the uneven progress of poverty reduction in different parts of the world, special attention should be paid to poverty in rural areas and among women, children and youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous groups and migrants. Overcoming poverty required public policies that promoted well-paid jobs with coverage for accidents and sickness; universal primary and secondary education; health care; and access to adequate housing and healthy nutrition.

81. Because poverty was a crosscutting issue, no country could meet its challenges alone. It could be addressed only by finding a balance among the three dimensions of sustainable development: peace, development and human rights. The causes of poverty needed to be addressed; the international community had an obligation to promote development as a pre-condition for achieving sustainable peace. The eradication of poverty was therefore not only a challenge but an ethical, social and economic priority. It was important to acknowledge that middle-income countries were home to the majority of the world's poor and that they faced continuing development challenges.

82. Cooperation towards sustainable industrial development was also key and required the participation of the business community. Her Government recognized the importance of strengthening cooperation with the private sector, civil society, academia, international organizations and financial institutions in order to expand the investment needed to attain the Sustainable Development Goals. Poverty eradication could not be achieved without the full involvement of the private sector; industrial development could offer decent employment for youth and was also a catalyst for scientific, technological and infrastructure development in support of sustainable development, which would reinforce the effort to combat and eradicate extreme poverty.

83. **Mr. Sobral Duarte** (Brazil) said that the multidimensional character of poverty was reflected in the universal nature of the 2030 Agenda; the achievement of Goal 1, on the eradication of poverty, was inseparable from the implementation of the other 16 Sustainable Development Goals. The means for financing development and therefore for combating poverty were outlined in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The international community already had the tools, the political commitment and the knowledge to deal with the issue; it must now accord priority to effective action and structural change. Agencies, funds and programmes should contribute to the creation of an enabling international environment that would lead to the full eradication of poverty and the achievement of sustainable development.

84. His country's experience over the past decade had proved that economic expansion and market forces alone could not provide long-term solutions to eradicating poverty. It was essential to strengthen social protection networks through cash transfer programmes that were fully integrated into public health and education systems. In Brazil, such programmes had improved access to financial services by the poorest and most marginalized sectors of society and had led to the removal of Brazil from the World Hunger Map of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Women played a central role in Brazil as the main focus of conditional cash transfers, which had empowered them with respect to their full and equal participation and leadership and enhanced the efficiency of the programmes themselves.

85. In order to achieve lasting gains, a balanced approach was required that valued human rights and left no one behind, enabling people to break the cycle of poverty in its multidimensional and intergenerational aspect. In that regard, his country supported the proclamation of a third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty to begin in 2018, in order to maintain the momentum of the effort to eliminate poverty by 2030.

86. **Mr. Bama** (Burkina Faso) said that his Government accorded high priority to poverty eradication. In July 2016 it had adopted a national economic and social development plan aimed at reforming institutions, modernizing public administration, developing human capital and invigorating key economic sectors. The strategic goals of the plan incorporated the primary targets of the Sustainable Development Goals and of Agenda 2063: the Africa We Want, of the African Union, with a view towards better integrating economic growth and transformation, reducing inequality and promoting social inclusion and environmental sustainability. The plan had been designed to create some 50,000 jobs a year and to reduce the incidence of poverty from 40 per cent to 35 per cent by 2020.

87. His delegation firmly believed that extreme poverty could be eliminated by 2030 throughout the world if countries acted in synergy and through strengthened partnerships to support the structural transformation of national economies.

88. **Mr. Conte** (Guinea) said that by placing the goal of eradicating poverty and hunger at the heart of the 2030 Agenda, the international community had sent a message to impoverished people the world over, who could take comfort in the fact that 15 years was the official deadline for ending extreme poverty. That message would ring hollow, however, without the necessary financing to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda. All available internal and external resources must be leveraged from both the public and private sectors. In that regard, the commitments agreed under the Addis Ababa Action Agenda should permit the broad mobilization of resources required for eradicating poverty by 2030. The Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty should build on the achievements of the first Decade in support of the ultimate goal of eliminating poverty within the framework of sustainable development. It was important for the international community to grasp the multidimensional nature of poverty, which went beyond absence of income or of access to means of subsistence.

89. His Government had developed a five-year socioeconomic development plan for 2016-2020 to address such key issues as combating poverty; improving governance; diversifying and expanding the economy; developing infrastructure and improving defence and security. The plan, which also addressed matters of well-being, gender equality and poverty eradication, would serve as a conceptual framework for assistance from his country's bilateral and multilateral partners.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

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Vice-Chair: Ms. Nipomici ..... (Republic of Moldova)

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In the absence of Mr Djani (Indonesia), Ms. Nipomici (Republic of Moldova), Vice-Chair, took the Chair

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 23: Eradication of poverty and other development issues (*continued*) (A/71/173)

(a) Implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) (*continued*) (A/71/181)

(b) Industrial development cooperation (*continued*) (A/71/264)

1. **Ms. Scott** (Namibia) said that in 2015, her country had adopted the Sustainable Development Goals and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and had committed to fully implement it through national development frameworks over the following 20 years. The aim was to eradicate poverty and hunger, fight inequality, and ensure that no one was left behind.

2. Namibia would work with other States to achieve that noble ideal; it had participated in the drafting of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and was integrating the 2030 Agenda into its national development plans, especially Goal 1 (No Poverty) and Goal 2 (Zero Hunger). It had made substantial progress since its independence in 1990 in spite of having faced considerable development challenges. A small country of 2.2 million people, it had experienced major droughts and floods, unfavourable unemployment rates, inequality, housing inadequacy, and widespread poverty.

3. To address those and other challenges, it had enthusiastically set about implementing the 2030 Agenda. In 2015, a Ministry of Poverty Eradication had been created within the Office of the President. A food bank had also been created to combat the effects of ongoing extreme drought and workshops had been held to ensure the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, which were interlinked in terms of executing the three dimensions of sustainable development: inclusive economic growth, protection of the environment, and social inclusion.

4. Her delegation looked forward to the high-level political forum on sustainable development to be convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council in July 2017; it would provide leadership on the implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda. Namibia urged the sharing of best practices and lessons learned at every opportunity, also reiterating the need for predictable financing to implement the 2030 Agenda, with programmes specifically targeting the eradication of poverty and hunger.

5. Her delegation took note of the challenges outlined by Ms. Dambisa Moyo in her keynote address at the Committee's 2nd meeting on the topic "One World, One Vision: Tackling Global Imbalances to achieve the 2030 Agenda", and in the report of the Secretary General on the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty indicating that inequality was most pronounced among women and youth. It therefore supported programmes spearheaded by women and youth as agents and drivers of economic and social development.

6. She highlighted the importance of continuous strong promotion of international trade that was based on a well-functioning, universal, rules-based, non-discriminatory, multilateral trading system and recognized regional trade as a vehicle for globalization. Committee discussions underscored the need to continue advocating for targeted capacity-building systems and to enhance international support for them with a view to promoting employment creation. Economic growth would be a major contributor to the eradication of poverty and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

7. **Mr. Cao** Zhiyong (China) said that the international community should create an environment conducive to the eradication of poverty and ensure that the people of each country enjoyed equal opportunities for development. Countries should prioritize poverty eradication as the core task of the 2030 Agenda, uncover the root causes of poverty, and work together to formulate sustainable, stable, long-term policies to address it. He stressed the need to implement inclusive economic and social policies, establish better social security and health care systems, reduce poverty caused by natural disasters and disease, and build fair and equitable global development partnerships. The developed countries should provide development assistance and support developing countries, particularly African and least developed countries, in their efforts to eradicate poverty.

8. From 2010 to 2015, the rural poverty figure in China had dropped from 166 million to around 56 million. China would lift the remainder of its rural population out of poverty over the next five years, an important step in its implementation of the 2030 Agenda and a demonstration of its resolve to achieve early results. At the same time, it would assist other developing countries, especially the least developed countries, in reducing poverty and improving livelihoods. Global industrial development cooperation would help to promote poverty reduction and economic recovery among developing countries. China recognized that the new concept of inclusive and sustainable industrial development, as advocated by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), required that developing countries raise their levels of industrialization in line with their respective national conditions and stage of development, so as to upgrade their industries. One of the outcomes of the 2016 Summit of the Group of 20 had been an initiative supporting industrialization in African and least developed countries that would energize the processes of interlinked development and industrialization. China stood ready to work with all countries to accomplish the lofty goal of eliminating poverty around the world.

9. **Mr. Tuy** (Cambodia) said that Cambodia had succeeded in achieving poverty reduction and other Millennium Development Goal targets before 2015 and had been chosen by the United Nations as a model. His country had achieved lower-middle-income status in 2015 through greater integration into the region. The Sustainable Development Goals would be important to support Cambodia's transition from least-developed to upper-middle-income status by 2030.

10. At the local level, Cambodia sought to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by investing in education, health and economic diversification. It planned to increase the share of its gross domestic product (GDP) represented by the industrial sector to 30 per cent by 2025 and diversify exports to avoid excessive reliance on the garment, tourism and agriculture industries, which were vulnerable to external shocks as well as climate change.

11. In collaboration with its development partners, the Government had taken a number of actions to address poverty and rural development. It attached particular importance to maintaining macroeconomic stability; improving rural livelihoods; expanding job opportunities; building capacities; strengthening institutions and improving governance; reducing vulnerability and strengthening social inclusion; and promoting gender equity. Population, urbanization and non-agricultural jobs were other priority areas.

12. As agricultural development was essential to poverty reduction, his Government had focused on implementing land reforms, distributing farmland to landless farmers, expanding irrigation, strengthening institutional mechanisms, utilizing modern farm inputs, and extending credit to farmers. Food security and nutrition reforms had been incorporated into the National Strategic Development Plan 2014-2018, in keeping with the ideology that "no one should die of starvation and ignorance". The National Strategic Development Plan contained a road map for the implementation of the Rectangular Strategy (Phase III) for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency, which outlined visible and realistic programmes and projects to achieve health and education vital to harmony within the family and society.

13. Achieving poverty reduction depended on progress in robust and equitable macroeconomic growth; strongly checking inflation; significantly increasing agricultural production and productivity; protecting and enhancing the environment; strengthening and improving infrastructure; employment creation; public administration and judiciary reform; and fast growth in the services sector, including tourism.

14. Cambodia was strongly committed to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 1 on ending poverty in all its forms everywhere. However, poverty eradication would require the engagement and partnership of all stakeholders. The 2030 Agenda could only succeed if developed countries put more effort into earnestly honouring their official development assistance (ODA) commitments. Support for developing countries must be increased with no political strings attached and a new, more equitable and balanced global development partnership must be built.

15. **Ms. Kone-Fofana** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that combating poverty was a top priority for her Government, which had integrated the Sustainable Development Goals into its two main development programmes, the National Development Plan and the Perspective Côte d'Ivoire 2040 initiative. Considering

the sizable economic growth her country had enjoyed over the period 2012-2015 as a result of political stability and proper functioning of institutions, the prospects of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals were good. All sectors of the economy had benefited from increased private and public investment, while health, educational, environmental and other programmes over the previous several years had led to concrete results in reducing poverty and improving living conditions. The agriculture and services sectors, for instance, had seen significant growth in production of cash crops and volume of users, respectively, while efforts in the area of combating corruption and improving the business environment were expected to allow Côte d'Ivoire to regain its status as a driver of economic growth in the West African Economic and Monetary Union.

16. In addition to plans aimed at eradicating poverty through economic growth, the Government had, with its partners, initiated programmes to ensure educational opportunities for children; create jobs for youth; and enable women, especially rural women, to improve their financial and other skills through better access to credit and means of production. Her delegation called on bilateral and multilateral partners to join her country in those endeavours, which would further the causes of reducing poverty and inequalities and implementing the 2030 Agenda. Her Government, which endorsed the vision set out in the African Union's Agenda 2063, believed that industrialization would be an invaluable tool for achieving sustainable development. She called for further cooperation to that end, and stressed the importance of honouring development financing commitments under the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Development Financing.

17. **Mr. Peketi** (Togo) said that women accounted for half the population of Togo, and slightly more than half of its working population and informal sector. The Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, the introduction of the National Forum on Togolese Women, and the adoption of a family code were among the measures his country had taken to improve their situation. It had also ratified international instruments on the empowerment of women and adopted strategies for access to microfinance, which had permitted the most vulnerable members of society to engage in productive economic activities.

18. His Government accorded top priority to the health sector. Under its national plans for health development, infant and child mortality rates had been nearly halved and new perspectives toward opening community mental health centres and providing essential medicines had taken hold. As long as developing countries were plagued by weak agricultural production, high unemployment, inequalities and social exclusion, economic crises and climate change, strong international cooperation would be necessary to promote industrialization, job creation in productive sectors, and higher incomes in fragile States. Togo had already launched a national process of structural transformation that took into account the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development, and would continue to lend its support to international actions to eliminate poverty, which spawned terrorism, conflicts and other challenges.

19. **Mr. Thammavongsa** (Lao People's Democratic Republic), stressing the importance of translating the 2030 Agenda into concrete actions, said that the poverty rate in the Lao People's Democratic Republic had decreased from 27.6 to 23.2 per cent between 2008 and 2013. His country was resolved to further reduce poverty and graduate from least-developed-country status. The progress it had achieved thus far had been possible through country-led efforts and the support and assistance of external partners, including development partners, United Nations agencies, and international organizations. The Sustainable Development Goals had been mainstreamed into the eighth national Five-Year National Social Economic Development Plan 2016-2020 (NSEDP). Localized Millennium Development Goal 9 on reducing the impact of unexploded ordnance had been carried over as Sustainable Development Goal 18 for the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

20. His country was strongly committed to eradicating poverty with a view to transcending least-developed-country status and had mobilized domestic and external resources to achieve its national development goals. It called upon development partners, United Nations agencies and international organizations to mainstream activities related to least developed countries into their policies and programmes and focus assistance on national priorities directly related to those countries' development needs.

21. **Mr. Yacouba** (Niger) said that reducing poverty was difficult in West Africa, particularly in the countries of the West African Economic and Monetary Union, which ranked among the lowest in the world on the Human Development Index. The scale of economic factors and regularity of natural disasters and locust attacks made it easy to lose sight of the root causes of poverty, as had happened in the case of the food crisis of 2005. The people of Niger had to contend with such health challenges as illness, disability and aging, long hours and low wages for rural workers, and low returns on production, and weak profit margins for informal activities in urban areas. School enrolment and literacy rates had risen over the previous several years, and infant mortality rates had dropped, but maternal mortality rates had risen. Access to drinking water had improved thanks to improved hydropower for villages and towns, but was still inadequate, as was access to electricity. With a view to fulfilling target 7.c of the Millennium Development Goals on halving the proportion of the population without access to safe drinking water, Niger had been seeking to achieve integrated water-resources management in accordance with the Dublin Statement on Water and Sustainable Development.

22. The Constitution of the Republic and other official texts formed the basis for governance, democracy and the rule of law in Niger, and the establishment of institutions dedicated to combating corruption, trafficking and financial crimes had improved its overall Corruption Perceptions Index.

23. **Mr. Muenda** (South Africa) said that although the number of people living on less than $1.25 a day had decreased worldwide, in Africa their numbers had increased. More needed to be done not only to address the symptoms of poverty but also to create physical, social, economic and political conditions that would support poverty eradication efforts and leave no one behind. The United Nations should provide coordinated support for national poverty eradication initiatives within the context of the 2030 Agenda. As indicated in the *Trade and Development Report, 2016*, development was a transformative process that created a virtuous circle of resource mobilization, increased employment, higher incomes, expanding markets and investment. United Nations entities should therefore enhance their coordination to ensure that their sustainable development efforts yielded the intended outcomes and that regions that lagged behind were prioritized.

24. His Government was also committed to the implementation of Agenda 2063 of the African Union. All sectors of African society should work together to build a prosperous and united Africa. The 2030 Agenda complemented the African Union's activities and would give Africa a good head start. Adequate financing for development, as outlined in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and sufficient official development assistance from development partners would also be needed.

25. Improved human resource development through education and skills development would help prevent the intergenerational transmission of poverty. His country was building an economy that created jobs, including through self-employment opportunities and improved educational outcomes.

26. Poverty eradication could not be achieved without improving rural development and the agricultural economy. In many African countries, around half of the poor lived in rural areas; interventions would be necessary to transform their situation. Investment in human capital through health care, education and training would enable more people to be economically active. Poor households could be left destitute as a result of disability, age or illness and therefore needed a safety net, which his Government provided in the form of social grants as well as basic services and other non-financial transfers.

27. Social inclusion was needed to ensure a more inclusive society with more integrated structures across class, race, religion and gender. Social capital needed to be strengthened, especially for the poor so that they could expand their networks and have access to information. Inasmuch as possible, greater economic opportunities for the poor should be linked to the protection and rehabilitation of ecosystems, the reversal of environmental degradation, and the promotion of ecotourism.

28. **Mr. Zamora Rivas** (El Salvador) said that his country welcomed recent multilateral achievements in the area of sustainable development and poverty eradication in particular. However, in spite of efforts made at the global level, much remained to be done. One of the main achievements of the 2030 Agenda was

the linkage between poverty and inequality. Indeed, poverty eradication required a reduction in social, economic and political inequality, especially in middle-income countries, where development was impeded not only by internal inequalities but also by international governance policies. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda, with its emphasis on ODA and a strengthened global partnership, was therefore key to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the specific development needs of middle-income countries. The United Nations needed to decide what its priorities and contributions should be.

29. In recent years, his country had undergone a process of transformation focused on poverty eradication, the reduction of inequality and social exclusion, and gender- and human rights-based equity. To implement the 2030 Agenda, a national sustainable development council had been established to bring together relevant sectors of the Government, the United Nations system, civil society and the private sector. The United Nations system should support the implementation of national development plans in accordance with the priorities identified by each Government and its institutional capacities.

30. **Mr. Morales López** (Colombia) said that progress in reducing poverty had been uneven between and within some countries and regions; greater efforts must be made to ensure that poverty eradication initiatives benefited all countries. Financial and non-financial resources needed to be mobilized to build a partnership to eradicate multidimensional poverty. That required transfers of technology to developing countries on preferential terms.

31. The first step was to understand the full complexity of poverty. Accordingly, his Government had introduced a multidimensional poverty index as a complement to the measurement of monetary poverty, and public policies had been developed to address the issues and deprivations faced by the poorest households and provide detailed follow-up on their implementation. As a result, 4 million people had been lifted out of multidimensional poverty in his country between 2010 and 2015.

32. In developing countries, industrial development was a source of economic growth, diversification and added value. Stronger international cooperation was therefore needed to build capacity in developing countries and, in particular, to create an international environment conducive to the integration of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises into global value chains and markets. Support for those enterprises was key to reducing inequality and enhancing inclusiveness since they could create employment and generate income.

33. Strengthened statistical systems were needed to gather the timely, accurate and disaggregated data that would enable better decision-making. All people should have the same opportunities regardless of their social, economic or physical circumstances. Rising out of poverty was merely the first step. The challenge was to ensure that all persons enjoyed prosperity in fair and equitable societies.

34. **Mr. Tadesse** (Ethiopia) said that the decline in poverty had been uneven in different regions, but 72 countries, including Ethiopia, had achieved the Millennium Development Goals target of halving undernourishment. Poverty nevertheless remained one of the primary universal challenges. Income inequality and unemployment were increasing. A weak global economy and volatile commodity prices had a negative impact on poverty eradication, especially in least developed countries and in Africa.

35. His country had achieved six of the Millennium Development Goals, including a halving of absolute poverty, which had declined in all regions and in both rural and urban areas. The political commitment of his Government and its coordinated approach to increasing agricultural production, establishing a safety net and investing in labour-intensive infrastructure projects had resulted in inclusive economic growth and job creation. However, millions still lived in absolute poverty, unemployment remained high especially among young people, and structural transformation remained slow. His Government had therefore prioritized structural change in its second growth and transformation plan, which emphasized inclusive and sustainable industrialization with a view to making Ethiopia a leader in light manufacturing on the continent by 2025. Labour-intensive industries that used agricultural inputs and promoted transfers of technology were being expanded. His Government was also building eco-friendly industrial parks to attract local and foreign investment and had organized, together with UNIDO, a successful agro-industry forum earlier in the month.

The manufacturing process was linked to micro- and small enterprises to promote job creation and the transfer of knowledge and skills.

36. Ethiopia had been one of the pilot countries in the Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development programme of UNIDO, which had aligned its country partnership programme with his country's industrial development strategy. The assistance of UNIDO and other development partners was crucial, especially in the areas of financing and capacity-building in both the public and the private sectors. Poverty eradication through sustainable agriculture and industrialization required an enabling international economic environment and enhanced partnerships.

37. **Mr. Tobgay** (Bhutan) said that the challenge of poverty was most daunting in least developed countries, which required particular attention in their efforts to eradicate poverty and leave no one behind. At the national level, his country's top priority remained poverty eradication within a development framework based on the concept of gross national happiness. Poverty had been reduced from 23.2 per cent in 2008 to 12 per cent in 2014. Bhutan was tackling poverty through social and rural development programmes geared towards improving quality of life and promoting income-generating activities.

38. Poverty eradication required inclusive economic growth, infrastructure development and a business-friendly environment to create jobs, support skills development and expand economic opportunities. Tourism was one sector where his country had a comparative advantage and that sector had contributed to socioeconomic development. Sustainable ecotourism was one of the main development strategies of Bhutan. Its tourism policy was based on "high-value, low-volume" tourism and had ensured that the tourism sector was managed in an environmentally friendly and culturally sensitive manner. Tourism had become the second-largest revenue generator after hydropower.

39. Sustainable industrial development was key to economic diversification, structural economic transformation, productive capacity-building, export enhancement and revenue generation. A national economic development policy was in place to guide economic development efforts through sustainable industrialization.

40. Poverty eradication efforts were important to his Government because they enabled it to address some of the constraints that hampered development. For groups of countries in special situations, the support of development partners was indispensable for poverty eradication and sustainable development.

41. **Mr. Soares** (Timor-Leste) said that his country's resilience and the spirit of its struggle for independence had been transformed into a driving force for development as an independent State. The Sustainable Development Goals had been integrated into a strategic development plan for the period from 2011 to 2030, by which time it was hoped his country would be an upper middle-income country.

42. Least developed countries and small island developing States faced numerous challenges requiring special attention and access to adequate and predictable resources. The new quadrennial comprehensive policy review should be responsive to the needs of least developed countries in the context of the 2030 Agenda and should support their graduation. Development partners, the United Nations system and other stakeholders should therefore comply with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which emphasized the critical role of ODA and foreign direct investment, and forge partnerships towards peace and resilience through enhanced engagement between Governments, development partners and civil society, in line with the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States promoted by the Group of Seven Plus (g7+).

43. His Government advocated a revitalization of global partnerships under the g7+ not only to share experiences but also to engage development partners, and mobilize resources for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. As a young country, Timor-Leste faced multiple development challenges but public-sector investment had improved the power supply, reduced child mortality, increased secondary school enrolment, and improved health care, international connectivity and vocational training and education.

44. As a post-conflict country, Timor-Leste had adopted a motto of "no peace without development and no development without peace." The country had made significant progress towards social cohesiveness and would hold presidential and parliamentary elections in 2017. The leadership transition from the older

generation to a younger one had strengthened the nation-building process and consolidated democracy, in particular through the g7+ intergovernmental organization, of which the permanent secretariat was located in Dili. The approach of the g7+ to engaging development partners was country-owned and country-led and used country systems. Other least developed countries were encouraged to adopt its "nothing about us without us" approach.

45. **Mr. Shilla** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that in spite of rapid economic development in recent years, his country still faced poverty challenges, including inadequate access to social and financial services, inadequate infrastructure, income inequality and a vulnerability to natural disasters and disease. His Government had therefore prioritized poverty eradication by, inter alia, adopting a coherent incomes policy, supporting rural development and providing basic social services.

46. His country's multisectoral approach to poverty eradication, articulated in its National Poverty Eradication Strategy, was reflected in the policies of its sectoral ministries and monitored by a unit in the Office of the Vice-President. The strategy would be key to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals since it aimed to accelerate economic growth, reduce poverty, improve social well-being and ensure good governance and accountability. Complementary government initiatives addressed other challenges such as climate change, the improvement of agricultural technology, trade expansion and infrastructure development. Those efforts had already yielded results such as 7 per cent economic growth, a figure which might have been higher had it not been for global and local challenges such as a severe drought.

47. As resource mobilization remained a challenge for most developing countries, a focus on a global partnership for sustainable development (Goal 17 of the 2030 Agenda), the means of implementation outlined in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the establishment of a technology bank for least developed countries, and the fulfilment of ODA commitments remained crucial. The cost per year of ending extreme poverty worldwide over 20 years had been estimated at $175 billion, which amounted to less than 1 per cent of the combined income of the world's rich countries; that showed that poverty eradication was possible if global partnerships were enhanced.

48. **Mr. Iziraren** (Morocco) said that although the rate of extreme poverty and percentage of undernourished people had declined, poverty was still one of the most pressing challenges, requiring the mobilization of stakeholder countries and of all stakeholders in international cooperation for development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should act as a catalyst to help developing countries rise to the challenge.

49. The battle against poverty had been a constant concern of public authorities in his country. Public budgets for 2006 provided for enhanced allocation of resources for social programmes, especially education, health care, and low-income housing, with special provisions for supporting youth employment programmes. The National Human Development Initiative launched by King Mohammed VI in 2005 had bolstered actions to assist all marginalized populations and had clearly had a favourable effect on poverty and vulnerability rates, which had decreased by 60 per cent and 40 per cent, respectively, between 2001 and 2011, with 50 per cent of those who had benefited coming from rural areas. The goal was to address social deprivation in order to ensure development in marginalized areas with a focus on vulnerable and underserved populations. That initiative had been recognized by the World Bank, with Morocco earning third place among 136 low and middle-income countries that had adopted programmes to improve the situation of marginalized populations.

50. As poverty was prevalent in rural areas, Morocco continued to accord high priority to rural development and improving the living conditions of rural populations, largely thanks to a country-driven policy focused on food self-sufficiency, developing joint family agricultural enterprises and promoting income-generating activities, especially for rural women.

51. His country had also undertaken projects designed to improve access to basic infrastructure in rural areas. Under the national programme for rural roadways, accessibility rates had reached 78per cent, lifting 2.5 million people out of isolation and building 15,500 km of roads in 2015. Those achievements had been reinforced by a new action plan launched in 2016, which would enable 32,600 km of roads to be built and

restore damaged roads, giving priority to the most remote rural areas.

52. The results achieved in the battle against poverty stemmed from a global, integrated vision, which consolidated a participatory approach that placed citizens at the centre of public policies; reinforced democratic processes to build a fair and prosperous society; and created a solid, competitive economy that would generate sustainable and inclusive growth to bring wealth and employment for all.

53. Morocco continued to take leadership in the fight against poverty and work towards achieving the rural development goals of the 2030 Agenda. The implementation of advanced decentralization processes and the acceleration of reforms to local and regional governance, the promotion of the rule of law and the fight against corruption should boost the actions of various stakeholders.

54. Morocco had encouraged South-South and triangular cooperation in its foreign policy, particularly in the African Arab world, strengthening its fight against poverty and food insecurity and sharing its experience to support numerous African countries through cooperation initiatives, including projects relating to irrigation, soil fertility, artificial insemination, the creation of agricultural hubs and the fight against the desert locust.

55. **Mr. Bankole** (Nigeria) said that remarkable progress had already been made towards the eradication of poverty, with good progress in halving the global proportion of people whose income was less than $1.50 per day. Approximately 900 million people had been lifted out of extreme poverty between 1990 and 2011. The main focus of the Sustainable Development Goals must now be lifting the bottom billion of the world's citizens from poverty, as prioritized in Goal 1. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda clearly indicated that global partnerships and concerted action were required to address the scourge of extreme poverty in a holistic manner. The bulk of those living in extreme poverty resided in Africa, particularly in least developed countries, that part of the world therefore merited particular attention, as did the cross-cutting and multidimensional issues of public health, nutrition, education and income level.

56. His country accorded high priority to sustainable, inclusive investment in industrialization to maximize the benefits of globalization; it was a key driver of economic growth, diversification and value addition in developing countries. Social protection as a right was also a powerful instrument for poverty reduction and social cohesion. Social security promoted sustainable economic and social development, helping countries to cope with global economic crises.

57. His Government had prioritized the empowerment of its citizens in achieving poverty eradication, social integration, and full employment and decent work through effective policy formulation, implementation and monitoring. To that end, in 2015 it had launched its most ambitious social inclusion programme, and in early 2016, it had introduced a new programme called the Labour Intensive Family Enterprise, providing agricultural extension services to farmers to promote and increase food production and provide employment. A Conditional Cash Transfer Scheme to provide financial support for many women, artisans, and agricultural workers had also been created. Social inclusion programmes, especially those targeting women and youth, would bring about social change.

58. Commending the United Nations system for supporting Members States in strengthening macroeconomic policy capacity and national development strategies, he urged the Organization and the international community to intensify its focus on eradicating extreme poverty and support developing countries in achieving that end. A value-driven global partnership could support the realization of the historic 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and make poverty history.

59. **Mr. Ramirez Carreño** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), noting that the first International Day for the Eradication of Poverty had been celebrated on 17 October 1993, said that with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, poverty eradication had become a priority for all of the world's countries. The United Nations had recognized the multidimensional nature of poverty and the need to focus on more than inadequate income and resources in order to guarantee sustainable livelihoods. According to the United Nations, over 830 million people lived in extreme poverty, 2.4 million people lacked access to modern sanitation services,

1.1 million people lacked electricity and 880 million people lived in marginalized urban areas. Fifty-nine million school-age children were not in school and youth unemployment rates hovered around 15 per cent, more than three times the rate for adults. That sad reality was proof that the hegemonic international economic system, namely, capitalism, had been a spectacular failure in furthering economic and social development worldwide. Colonialism, the plundering of natural resources, wars and foreign interference and an unjust and exclusive financial system had condemned entire continents and millions of people to live in the most abject poverty without any hope of progress. The thousands of refugees who had thrown themselves to their deaths in the Mediterranean were but one example.

60. Countries must work together to achieve greater equality and bridge the gap between the richest and poorest people, based on special and differential treatment, in a system of universal and equitable exchange where each country received according to its needs and was expected to give according to its capabilities. Those urgently required actions could not be left in the hands of private interests; rather, it was the responsibility of the State to promote development through its national plans. Development was a fundamental human right, not a business transaction. The international community must strive to advance policies on education and inclusiveness, based on principles of solidarity and complementarity, which were fundamental to guarantee that those living in poverty could overcome it and those who had overcome it would not fall back into it.

61. Having recovered sovereign management of its natural resources and distributed oil revenues to its people, Venezuela had turned to addressing existing inequalities (income and expenses) and promoting social programmes (health and housing, education, social protection), citizens' rights, inclusiveness, participation and gender equality. From that holistic perspective, overcoming poverty also meant overcoming the capitalist model through popular participation. Those were the principles underlying the zero poverty plan and economic and social agenda of the Bolivarian revolution, under which social programmes would be strengthened and developed through the participation of every sector of society, especially the people, who were increasingly organized and coordinating their actions with the State.

62. The figures pointed to success. Between 1998 and 2015, poverty rates had dropped from 28.9 per cent to 19.7 per cent and extreme poverty had gone from 10.8 per cent to 4.7 per cent. Unemployment had been reduced from 15.2 per cent to 7.3 per cent. In 2005, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) had declared the country free from illiteracy; overall school enrolment had increased from 43 to 79 per cent, and primary school enrolment, from 89 to 93 per cent. According to UNESCO, Venezuela held second place in Latin America for university enrolment and fifth in the world. The Gini coefficient, at 0.38, was above that of several Latin American countries. Furthermore, hundreds of thousands of people enjoyed access to free health care, were able to purchase food at a lower cost or obtain it at no cost, and could obtain credit below market rates and enjoy other benefits in addition to receiving a minimum daily wage. Under the Venezuelan housing programme (*Gran misión vivienda*), 1.1 million homes had been built since 2010.

63. In conclusion, he said that Venezuela would make every effort to implement an inclusive agenda aimed at achieving a poverty-free world and sustainable development with balanced integration of its economic, social and environmental dimensions, and restoring a spirit of solidarity among all men and women on Earth.

64. **Archbishop Auza** (Observer for the Holy See) said that, too many people still suffered economic, social and political exclusion; despite a decline in extreme poverty since 2008, over one in ten of the world's population lived below the poverty line. A number of lessons had been learned from past efforts to eradicate poverty. The first was the importance of reframing the issue as one of integral human development rather than as one primarily linked to economic growth. In his 1967 Encyclical Letter, Pope Paul VI had been one of the earliest proponents of the need for an integral human development approach, which had later been adopted by many international agencies. With the adoption of a human-centred development approach that viewed humans as social, political and spiritual and not simply economic producers and consumers, spending on health care, education, peace and community-building had finally

been acknowledged as a necessary investment in human and social capital.

65. A second lesson had highlighted the importance of addressing the relationship between inequality and poverty: policies that promoted greater equality, including equal education and universal access to health care, fostered the greatest economic development. A third lesson, underscored by Pope Francis in his September 2015 address to the plenary Assembly, was that the poor themselves needed to participate in poverty reduction. Exclusionary practices and structures would always be barriers to human development. Women must be included as equal and active participants in the development of their communities; when women and girls did not have access to education or were subjected to violence and discrimination, their families, communities and society were deprived of their important influence as drivers of development. As Pope Saint John Paul II had observed, work as a form of social participation was important because the goods and services it produced contributed to human dignity, but even more so because of how it changed people for the better.

66. Another lesson was that social protection was a benefit that contributed to human development and economic progress, and should extend beyond rich countries. The experience of developed countries and the evidence of social protection measures introduced in developing countries suggested that social protection promoted economic prosperity; indeed, the promotion of greater equality had led to greater economic efficiency and in many cases to the creation of new businesses and entrepreneurs.

67. **Mr. de Vidal y Sepulveda** (Observer for the Sovereign Order of Malta) said that work carried out by the Order through its regular activities, disaster relief branch, global funds and related projects focused on supporting the most vulnerable world citizens, irrespective of race, religion, social class or ideology.

68. Despite great progress in technological innovation, the availability of information, and economic productivity, the world still lacked equality of opportunity. Increasing inequality within and between States was the most pressing issue of modern times; the goal must be to fend it off and work for an environment that fostered collective development.

69. Providing basic services was a prerequisite for equitable socioeconomic development, and yet those services were lacking in many communities where the Order was active. The Sustainable Development Goals must be grounded in measures that elevated human dignity and social inclusion. A society was only as strong as its weakest members, a paradigm that extended to the world. In light of that reality, the Order of Malta had been instrumental in countries like Colombia, which had the greatest number of internally displaced refugees (7 million) in the world; it had trained farmers there in more efficient methods and provided them with more robust seed stock to achieve abundant harvests in spite of drought. Haiti had suffered through the region's worst drought in 35 years; in response to that crisis, the Order had initiated a number of drinking water projects to provide relief to the more than 1.5 million Haitians suffering from lack of water. It had also installed infrastructure resistant to natural disaster, such as aseismic aqueducts and more efficient irrigation systems. Such sustainable programmes provided relief for individual suffering while increasing peoples' economic capacity through the dignity of their own work. As conditions worsened in Haiti owing to Hurricane Matthew, the Order would intensify its work there. It called on the international community to do likewise.

70. The Order was committed to all of the Goals, especially the elimination of poverty through proper environmental stewardship and support; through a variety of innovative programmes, many of those issues could be dealt with for the benefit of humanity. In Bolivia, the Order had worked with local groups to improve agricultural practices and had achieved an 83 per cent increase in potato harvests, directly benefiting more than 600 families.

71. Beyond agriculture and infrastructure, it was important to invest in education, which provided a sustainable means of eradicating poverty. The Order continued to battle illiteracy and the dearth of programmes to develop vocational talent throughout Latin America with its reading and computer courses and vocational studies centres, especially for youth; those same strategies had brought significant progress to countries such as the Philippines and Timor-Leste.

72. The Order would pursue its mission of the past 900 years: coming to the aid of the marginalized and

cooperating with the international community to further social development. Aware that basic services were necessary to build sustainable and dignified societies, it called on the international community to commit both the political will and necessary resources to that end.

73. **Mr. Carvalho Pinheiro** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that extreme poverty continued to affect approximately 1 billion people around the world. Joblessness and underemployment, coupled with stagnant real wages, had stalled poverty reduction in many countries. Only one third of the poor in developing and emerging countries held a job; employment was often poorly paid, low-skill and precarious. The human cost of poverty lay behind the statistics: the undermining of dignity, vulnerability to hunger, illness, human rights abuses, discrimination, humiliation and exclusion.

74. The Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty had helped to raise awareness and strengthen coordination, coherence and synergies related to the contribution of decent work to eradicate poverty, demonstrating that access to decent work opportunities was the most effective and sustainable way out of poverty. The decade had brought together the agencies, funds and programmes in the United Nations system to work successfully and in a coordinated manner, and the International Labour Organization had collaborated to build policy coherence through the system-wide plan of action for the Second Decade.

75. "Full employment and decent work for all" was a universal objective by virtue of its inclusion in the 2030 Agenda under Sustainable Development Goal 8. The four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda — employment creation, social protection, rights at work and social dialogue — had become integral elements of the 2030 Agenda and were embedded in the targets of many of the other 16 Goals.

76. Adequate social protection systems were required to ensure that no one was left behind. To that end, ILO and the World Bank had launched a Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection aimed at supporting the design and implementation of sustainable social protection systems, including floors, to ensure income security and support for all people across the life cycle, especially the poor and vulnerable.

77. Promoting employment formalization to improve job quality was paramount. A new historic landmark recommendation concerning the transition from the informal to the formal economy (Recommendation 204) had been adopted at the International Labour Conference in 2015. That strategically significant recommendation provided guidance on the formalization of economic units and employment and was an important step towards increasingly inclusive development, poverty eradication, and the reduction of inequality, especially for those in the informal economy.

78. Another important milestone of the International Labour Conference had been the discussions on the theme "Decent work in Global Supply Chains". Global supply chains generated jobs, contributing to sustainable development, but could also lead to a decent work deficit. A resolution and action-oriented conclusions adopted at the Conference gave ILO a mandate to lead the global call for action to bridge governance gaps in sectoral, national, regional and international supply chains.

79. Through its seven centenary initiatives, ILO was focusing its efforts on ensuring that Governments and organizations had the tools to shape a sustainable, inclusive future. The End to Poverty Centenary Initiative was specifically designed as a vehicle to take forward the work of ILO in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.